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THE WORKS OF GEORGE MOORE
EBURY EDITION

APHRODITE IN AULIS

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A MUMMER'S WIFE

MUSLIN

CONFessions OF A YOUNG MAN

ESTHER WATERS

THE UNTILLED FIELD

THE LAKE

MEMOIRS OF MY DEAD LIFE

HAIL AND FAREWELL

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APHRODITE IN AULIS

AVOWALS

CONVERSATIONS IN EBURY STREET

DAPHNIS AND CHLOE

AND PERONNIK THE FOOL

THE PASSING OF THE ESSENES

APHRODITE IN AULIS

BY

GEORGE MOORE



London
William Heinemann Ltd.

1937

<i>First published in a Limited Edition</i>	1930
<i>Uniform Edition</i>	1931
<i>Reprinted</i>	1933
<i>Ebury Edition</i>	1937

Printed in Great Britain, at
The Windmill Press, Kingswood, Surrey

SIR JOHN THOMSON WALKER

My dear Sir John. Since time began, that is to say, since books came to be written, authors have been at pains to devise ingenious pretexts for dedicating their books to important people. I am exempted from the pains of my predecessors by the fact that the book I am dedicating to you comes to you by right ; without you it would never have been written. The book was dependent upon you from the day that I came to see you two years ago. When I caught sight of you coming down the passage I knew instinctively that the truth was drawing near, and when you said : An operation is necessary, I assented, pleading, however, for a month's delay. I am planning a book, I said ; it will take a year to write, but in a month I can draw up a plan that will cheer me during the long weeks in the Nursing Home, helping away the weary hours, night and day. Will you grant me a month ? You acquiesced, but I read in your face that you were against the delay, and after a week of struggle I entered the Home, to which you came every day to listen to my confused babble, giving enough attention to it to keep the thought out of my mind that I was dying. You sat weighing good hopes with bad, determined to save my life if it could be saved, and at the end of two months and a half I staggered out of the Home into a cab, a shrunken piece of wreckage, craving for the seashore.

The sea and its salt breezes restored me to health, and soon I began to write ; but I burnt as much as I wrote, and when you came to see me before leaving London for a holiday, I told you that I had given up all hope of writing Aphrodite in Aulis. The words won't stick together ! I cried, with doleful accent. My gift of writing, such as it was, has left me. I am strong in health, but mentally paralysed. The poison of Uræmia, you answered, affects the creative parts of the brain for at least six

months. Another three months of empty phrases ! I waited, and you went away to Scotland, leaving me to continue to write and to burn. But every month the burning diminished, and now I am dedicating Aphrodite in Aulis to you, for it comes to you by right—Manet's words to me when he gave me a portrait of a Polish lady, inscribing his name along one of the sticks of her fan.

Sincerely yours : George Moore.

*121 Ebury Street,
London, S.W. 1, November 1929.*

APHRODITE IN AULIS

CHAPTER I

ABOUT an hour after midnight Kebren was roused from his sleep by a voice crying in his ear : To Aulis ! To Aulis ! Why to Aulis ? he asked, as he lay between sleeping and waking, certain that he must obey the voice, but uncertain whether he should wait till morning or begin the journey now. By walking all night I shall arrive at Aulis in the afternoon, Aulis ? In Boeotia, he muttered, and lying on his side he strove to associate the name with some great event ; but he groped in vain till his eyes fell on the quires of the Iliad which he had laid on a stool by his bedside. The Greek fleet sailed from the bay of Aulis for Troy ! he said, and dozed a while longer, foreseeing the journey that lay before him, losing sight of the road in the hills, sleep closing it to him ; and then, awaking a little, he sat up in his bed so that he might hear better. But the voice that had spoken did not speak again. All the same, I am bidden by a God—there can be no doubt of that, he cried, springing from his bed naked and shapely as the sculpture of his time, an Athenian of the time of Pericles, a young man in the early twenties, a figure that the Gods bring to birth in their own likeness, with a head and shoulders that a sculptor had said were the finest in Athens.

A fair sight he was as he sought his clothes, finding them instinctively, like a somnambulist ; and after knotting his sandals several times, as if aware of the length of the journey he was about to undertake, and having strapped his knapsack on his back without asking why he should burden himself with the quires of the Iliad, he stumbled out of the house repeating the words : To Aulis ! To Aulis ! to himself and afterwards to the soldiers at the Acharnian Gate when

challenged by them, adding his name, though they had not asked for it, saying : Kebren, an actor from the theatre, on his way to Aulis. A pleasant moonlight stroll ! a soldier cried as he shook the dice-box, but the implied warning of the length of the journey passed unheeded, and almost before the rattle of the dice had passed out of his ears he was walking like an animal, without a thought in his head, his brain benumbed. On arriving at the bridge-head the murmur of the water roused him a little. A mysterious sound is that of water running, he said. All the same, I cannot spend the night listening to the warble of the Kephisos under its oleanders ! And he continued his journey thinking that perhaps the Gods, having knowledge of many things and being responsible for many happenings in the battles before Troy, were anxious that their expounder should be learned in history and able to answer any questions that might be put to him. Should a caviller ask me if the bay of Aulis be large enough to contain the entire Greek fleet it might throw discredit upon me, and indeed upon the Gods themselves, if I were not ready with an answer. Or it may be that I shall return from Aulis with the quires of the Iliad on my back, to take my passage in the next ship that looses for Cnidus and pursue my calling as a rhapsodist, dying without having ever understood the design of the Gods in sending me on this long journey. The power of the Gods over men is not stinted to one generation, and it may be that this journey to Aulis lies beyond the scope and business of my life, that I am but an instrument, to be thrown aside when that which is decreed is on its way to fulfilment. . . . He stopped, frightened by the mystery, and might have returned to Athens if he had not been startled by the strangeness of the country around him.

Where am I ? he cried, and left the road for the climbing of a hill, from the top of which he could survey the country better. But when he reached the top there was little to be seen, no more than a grey-green tone stretching up to the pines of the foot-hills as far as Dekeleai ; and asking himself

if he should dare a short cut through the olive garths, he descended the hillside and stepped across the road into a darkness of downward-sweeping boughs, to pick his way through a cumber of sharp stones and moss-grown rocks, stopping at last to select a stout reed from the stacks piled against the trees with which the olive-gatherers whipped the branches. I can now defend myself against a dog, he said. As if in answer to his thought a fierce barking began, and he climbed into the branches of an old olive to wait till the God that had bidden him to Aulis should seal the nostrils of the dogs to his scent or drift it out of their reach. One or the other the God certainly must have accomplished, he thought, for after snuffing about not far from the bough on which he was seated the dogs returned to their kennels ; and when he issued from the garth he vowed to keep to the track, which he could see ascending a hillside, to drop into a valley—A track that I must follow without attempting any more short cuts till it brings me to the foot-hills. And forgetful of how nearly he had been torn to pieces he trudged on, arriving at the foot-hills at the setting of the moon.

Had it not been for the time I wasted in that garth outwitting the dogs I should have been here whilst there was light. Now I must wait by the roots of this great ilex till the world lightens again, which I can do without danger of oversleeping—rooks are the worthiest of watchers, going away at daybreak with noisy cawings to search for food for their young. Faithful watchers, I commit myself to your care ! he muttered as he laid himself down amid the roots of the tree to sleep if he could. I . . . must . . . go . . . to . . . sleep ! I . . . must . . . go . . . to . . . sleep ! But neither the spell in the words nor the counting of imaginary sheep availed him, for the rooks continued softly cawing in the branches, keeping him awake, till at last a bird flew away with a loud caw. He expected the others to follow, but this did not happen, and cursing the dreaming rookery overhead he walked into the forest asking himself if the early

rook had left her nest at the instance of a noisy chick that had broken its shell during the night. The dawn is not yet, he said, but I shall not come to harm in these woods unless I meet with wolves hunting deer ; even so, they will hardly turn aside from the deer to snap at me. If I escape from wolves for another quarter of a league, I shall be walking up and down the long streets of Dekelia searching for the sign of an inn, and should that welcome sign come to mine eyes Dekelia will be a charming village ; but should it not, every house and gable-end, every cock that crows and every dog that barks, will be hateful to me, and I shall wander over the top into Boetia without seeing anything or hearing anything, the world no more than a dim blur to me—such is the power of food to make or to mar us poor mortals ! But it is not wise, he continued, for the traveller to dwell on the pork or mutton that he'll find at the end of his journey or midway in it ; thought increases hunger and begets disappointment ; and it will be wiser to keep my eyes on the path and avoid the ruts than to peer among the tree-tops for the dawn, which will come in its own time. And so he fared on till the grey walls of Dekelia came into view, bringing with them visionary flames of kitchen fires.

The hunting of the boar is frequent in these woods and his cheek may have come into the larder, a rare delicacy at this time of morning—for morning cannot be far off ; I believe it to be showing above the hills. And having quoted the Homeric tag to himself, he continued to seek the inn up and down the long streets, looking through gateways into mysterious courtyards, and finding it nowhere, became possessed of the belief that he had come upon a village without a tavern. A sad discovery indeed ! he muttered, one in which philosophy finds no root-hold and hope dies, admonishing the traveller to sit on a doorstep. But it profits no man to despair. Fare on, traveller, fare on, and sooner or later a brown slice from the spit will fall to thy lot ! Before the slice comes my thirst, which I must quench, if not with wine at least with water,

and I hear the sound of water running ; somewhere in all this tangled undergrowth there must be a spring-head. And whilst seeking it the smell of goats came to his nostrils. The goatherd will be able to direct me ; and passing over the ridge he found the herd brows ng on myrtles in the charge of a small man with the tawny skin of a he-goat over his shoulders and sandals of twisted grass on his feet. Friend, canst direct me to the spring-head ? can indeed ! the goatherd answered, and calling to his son to keep the herd on the myrtles till he returned, he led Kebren up the hillside, and bade him drink from a trick e of water amid tall grasses, which Kebren was loth to do for he had looked forward to rocks with water spouting cheerily from them. Kneel and drink without fear, said the goatherd ; and on rising from his knees Kebren declared the wa er to be the purest he had ever tasted. Sweeter than the wine I have in my gourd, said the goatherd, which I was ashamed to offer thee ! He spoke of the inn at Dekeleia, and Kebren said he had not been able to find it. Nothing strange in that, the goatherd answered. The sign was blown away in a storm of wind some nights ago and not hung again, the innkeeper being a lazy fellow who thinks more about drinking himself than serving customers. So there is good wine at Dekeleia, said Kebren. Now, if thou wert to go thither and buy me a jar—— I can get thee wine without going as far as Dekeleia. My wife hath always a jar of good wine to sell for a bit of silver—she is from Chios. The strangers that pass this way drink it for their money ; she drinks it for her pleasure with a shepherd, who beats me at her bidding when I am drunk. The goatherd began to strip to show last week's bruises, but Kebren bade him hasten to his wife, saying : The sooner we eat the sooner the day will become hopeful to us. And wondering what sort of food the goatherd would bring back, he lay admiring the great plain showing through the gnarled trees and the timbers of the old mill spanning the river Asopos. More than once he muttered : His wife is from Chios ! and whilst trying to recall

the exact flavour of the wine she represented, place and time began to fade, and he was aware of the bright spring morning only as the birds and plants are, scent and sound merging into one, till the arrival of the goatherd with a sack over his shoulder roused him.

Two flagons of wine as good as any that ever were offered to a thirsty traveller, sir, and a cheese, too, with butter and bread and a honey cake. And whilst considering some salted stock-fish brought out from the very bottom of the sack Kebren asked the goatherd how it was that his wife had allowed him so much, to which the goatherd answered : All I had to do was to show her the drachmæ. She is generous enough at the sight of silver, surly at that of copper, folds her hands and goes about her business when there's neither silver nor copper. Rail not at the wife the Gods have given thee, cried Kebren, but thank them for the wine we are about to drink, if it be Chian. My wife is from Chios, as I have said, the goatherd answered, and the wine thou'rt drinking is from her father's vine. He cut the cheese and the bread, and when these were eaten he pressed the honey cake upon Kebren, telling that his wife had said : The traveller must have it. And so firm was she that thou shouldst eat of her cake that I guessed her to have quarrelled with the shepherd — a greedy lout who will love her less this evening for the missing of it. With thy stout olive staff thou shouldst be able to deal him an evil blow, said Kebren. Drink, and find courage ! The goatherd needed no pressing to return to the flagon ; but for every cup he drank he would have Kebren drink another, which Kebren feigned to do, certain that were he to drink another cup a goatherd coming by might open his knapsack and take from it money and manuscript.

My goatherd nods ! he said to himself, and unable to suppress the apprehensions, fears and alarms that crowded upon him, he rose to his feet, and was halfway down the hillside when a woman coming up the path cried : My husband—where is he ? Asleep under the plane-trees on the hillside,

Kebren answered. And the goats nibbling in Biton's garth—he shall know of this when I come upon him ! He is not to blame, said Kebren, hoping to save his late companion from some of the blows that await'd him ; and he would have excused him further, but a wayfarer asked to be directed to the oracle of Trophonios. An oracle well reported in all the countries I have visited, he added, a good oracle for dreams and if thou hast been dreaming of late and needest an interpretation of thy dreams, we might journey on together. I am bidden by a God to Aulis, Kebren replied, and must hasten. Thou'lt find the oracle of Trophonios between Mount Helikon and Lake Kopais. My good wishes to thee. And descending the winding road, with a blue strait of sea bordered by a white line of coast before his eyes, he crossed the river Asopos and made his way into Aulis, saying : A poor little town, with some trade, for there are wharves, and I'll warrant no more than six men and women who will give ear to a reading of the Iliad, or understand it if they do. . . . Words failing him suddenly, he staggered towards some white sand between rocks, on which he could sleep soft, and lay down.

CHAPTER II

How long he slept he did not know, but he must have slept deeply, for when he opened his eyes he gazed about him unable to remember how he had come among unknown rocks in front of a narrow strait of sea. At last he said : The quires of the Iliad are in my knapsack. I am in Aulis. I lay down among these rocks and fell asleep. The wharves were empty when I came, and now they are thronged with wharfingers busy unloading a great galley, come up with the tide, no doubt, and beyond the strait is the white-topped pyramid of Dirphys above Chalkis. It was in front of me all the way from Dekeleia, but I was thinking—— A man going by cried : If thou wouldest earn a few coins go to Otanes, the tall man

yonder talking with his daughter. . . . The wharfinger runs on, thinking he hath conferred a benefit on an outcast ! Kebren muttered ; so travel-stained am I that he takes me for one. From another wharfinger he learned that Otanes was a great trader and the owner of many ships : And if it be a passage thou'rt seeking, address thyself to him. Whereupon Kebren thanked him, and presenting himself to Otanes as an Athenian come that day to Aulis, he begged to be directed to a house where he could get a lodging for the night— To-morrow I am returning to Athens, he added. And Otanes told him that when the ship had finished unloading he would lead him to a house where he could sleep in safety. But why keep the traveller waiting for his bed, father? Biote— Otanes began, and the name seemed to Kebren well suited to the small girl standing by him. Thy daughter, he said, speaks kindly on behalf of a stranger, but I beg that thy courtesy shall not come between thee and thy business. Otanes answered that the unloading of the last bales did not need his watchfulness, and after bidding the captain and the crew a good night's rest, he returned to Kebren and Biote.

Our stranger hath not told thce, father, that he came from Athens to see the bay of Aulis. A long and fatiguing journey, Otanes answered, for so small a thing as our bay, or more correctly, our two bays or coves ; and already disappointed thou'rt regretting thy journey ? he asked, turning to Kebren. It was not from the Piræus that the Greek fleet sailed for Troy ! Kebren replied. So it was a memory of a fleet that sailed more than four hundred years ago that brought thee hither ? I am about to start on a long itinerary, sir, reading the Iliad and explaining it, and the months that I spent in Athens playing messengers in the theatre will make my reading acceptable and interesting wherever I go—such is my hope. An actor ! said Otanes. Father, the young man hath walked twelve leagues to-day and cannot relate his whole life to thee on the way to "The Golden Fell." We are at the door of the inn, and if thou wouldest hear his story lead him no

further—— But offer him a room in our house, Otanes interjected ; there are many empty ; and turning to Kebren he added : We shall be pleased and honoured if thou'lt accept our hospitality. And leaving “ The Golden Fell ” they returned the way they had come.

Thou'lt tell us thy story this evening, said Otanes. Unless thou wouldst prefer, sir, to hear the greatest of all stories, the Iliad. Here we are, Otanes continued, at the head of the lane, or rather alley, leading into a little square ; over it my house abuts. We shall pass through wonder gateway. And when we do, Biote said to Kebren, look up, for above the gateway is my pigeon-cote, with many bright heads craning out of their little doorways to welcome their mistress's return. A porter opened to their knocking and as they passed through a courtyard in which casks, bales and sacks were thrown about and piled in heaps, Otanes stopped to tell Kebren that it was here they had lived in his father's time, but since his own fortunate purchase of ships, and the crews to man them, he had built over what was once the garden, leaving the old buildings to be used as warehouses. Buyers leave their purchases on my hands longer than they should, he added, and when three or four ships arrive together—— But come this way.

A covered passage took them into a second courtyard, and seeing a tiled roof projecting from the walls, supported by pillars, Kebren thought of the pleasant shelter it doubtless afforded in times of sun and rain. He admired the River-God spouting in the centre of the court, and the moment seeming to demand words of eulogy he sought them. But his brain was tired, and he spoke instead of his long walk, whereupon Otanes called to a slave, saying : Timotheus, conduct my guest to the bath and give him a change of clothing. . . . Art glad, father, we did not leave him at the inn ? Otanes held up a warning hand, and when Kebren was out of hearing the pleasant evening that awaited them, listening to the story of the Iliad—if, said Biote, he be not too tired to read—was

discussed round the fountain till he returned to them an hour later. I see thy recovery is complete ! said Otanes, smiling, and leaving the courtyard they walked through an open doorway into a hall hung with tapestries, Otanes telling that these were woven by his wife, now dead, aided by her hand-maidens, to whom she had taught her craft, in which she surpassed all weavers outside of Attica. Biote, though only a child when her mother died—— Do not speak, father, of my work ; mother guided my hands. Biote's work is second only to her mother's, Otanes continued, as they advanced up the hall, and when the three were seated on the dais the rest of the company came trooping in, to find their places at a lower table under the headship of the steward.

Amongst the women Kebren noted one whom he thought might be Biote's old nurse ; the others he judged to be clerks and apprentices from the counting-house ; and during the meal the eyes of these were frequently directed towards the dais. Wondering what great personage I may be, Kebren said to himself, for the master to place me with so much ceremony at his right hand ! And with a view to showing his knowledge, and also because he felt that it would not be manners to drink the wine that was poured into his goblet without speaking of its quality, he said : A great vintage truly ! Many have praised the vintage without asking whence came the goblet, Otanes replied, and to exalt himself he told how one of his agents had obtained the goblet from the workshop of Douris himself. One anecdote led to another, and feeling his weariness passing from him, Kebren would have liked the meal prolonged for another hour ; but Otanes, anxious to hear him tell of the Iliad led the way into the courtyard, saying : I have a little Hermes in a niche opposite the fountain, and on the bench of olive-wood beneath him thou shalt sit to-night to expound, and to read, perchance, if thou wouldest enforce thine argument by quotation. The air is so still that a lamp will burn without a flicker. He called for one to be brought, and finding after many changes the position in

which the light would best fall upon the page, he sent the slave that had brought the lamp to tell the women in the outer courtyard to chatter elsewhere till the lecture was finished. And Kebren began :

Somewhat clouded, like Olympus itself, the Iliad began to emerge from a great mass of literature several hundred years ago. How many we know not only this : that the fall of Troy provided the rhapsodists, rough and ready poets, with a subject, a poetic quarrel in which each might discover a story, an episode that amused his mind ; and telling it over to himself the rhapsodist walked reciting it from memory, changing it often, introducing new episodes and relinquishing episodes that had failed to please. As he journeyed from one king's court to another, from one wedding feast to the next, he met other rhapsodists, each with a destination and a narrative, and drinking together at the inns they borrowed ideas from each other, here and there a phrase. Many beautiful stories were told about Troy, and how its fall came to pass, and many of these were for a long time believed to be by Homer. Whilst preaching and talking to the folk come from the town to take the air by the river bank, I shall be asked when Homer flourished, and to this I will make answer that I do not know. I shall have to rely on the mists of the years, and when the caviller hath granted me these, and is silent, I shall continue to tell that a great many of the poems written after the fall of Troy and once deemed worthy of Homer were later cast out of the canon as unworthy of him. Was Homer a myth, then ? the caviller will ask, and I shall answer : A great poet lived, but we do not know when he lived. Out of the great mass of poems written he retained what pleased him and cast out what displeased him, transforming whatever he took over from the rhapsodists—if he took anything over, which I do not believe, so completely is the Iliad of one mind in conception and detail, in the choice of episodes and the placing thereof ; and of all, the genius, the beauty of the mind, is revealed in the versification, which is always of the same

perfection, and as easily distinguishable from the crude poems formerly attributed to Homer as the songs of nightingales from the croaking of rooks. The tradition that Homer was a blind poet I have often been tempted to regard as a mere figure of speech, with no other meaning in the beginning than that Homer was a great visionary, receiving his inspiration direct from Olympus, the Gods needing a human chronicler ; and of this belief I find confirmation in the poem itself, there being more eyesight in the Iliad than in any other poem. I am afraid that those who cling to the belief that Homer was a blind man who chanted the Iliad to a lyre accompaniment will answer me that tradition does not say that Homer was born blind ; he was deprived of his sight, they will aver, by the Gods themselves, and for good reason : that their chosen chronicler, relieved of the distraction of the visible world, might relate the invisible with more than natural intensity.

I shall have somewhat to say about the composition of the book, of the art displayed in it, but for the moment I would speak to you of the central figure, Helen. Helen was of divine birth, fairest daughter of the Cloud-Compeller, who ravished Leda, Helen's mother, in the form of a swan, whilst she was bathing in a river the name of which hath unfortunately passed out of my mind ; it will come to me presently. But what is more important than the name of the river is the fact that Zeus transformed himself into a swan. The prosaic-minded will conclude that he chose the swan as a disguise because Leda was bathing in a river. Others who would acquit Zeus of a brutal lust will be led to conclude that being minded to give the most beautiful thing in the world to Greece, he disguised himself as a swan. And to make my idea that Helen was a premeditated gift to Greece from Zeus himself easy of acceptance, I will remind you that Helen from her earliest girlhood was looked upon as the most beautiful thing ever born into the world. All the kings of Greece sought her in marriage, and when she wedded Menelaus they formed a league to protect her against the stranger, the thought being

in them all that somebody would come to carry her away. And not only was Helen's marriage fraught with significance ; her rape by Paris was hardly less so ; for Eris, or Strife, at a great feast of the Gods to which she was not invited, threw a golden apple among the guest with the words : To the Fairest ! inscribed upon it. Hera, Athene and Aphrodite were each convinced that the apple came to her by right, and quarrelling began, which to settle the Lord of the Clouds bade them repair to Mount Ida, where they would meet a beautiful youth named Paris who would present the apple to one of them. Each in turn tried to tempt Paris with gifts, Hera offering him the empire of Asia and untold wealth, Athene great glory and renown, but Aphrodite whispered in his ear that if he gave the apple to her, she would give him in return Helen, fairest of women, wife of the King of Sparta.

It is strange (or maybe not strange at all—so much common, ephemeral stuff having gone into the making of man) that the glory of Croton's wife, who runs away from her husband's counter, should be preferred to the Helen we meet in the Iliad, full of grief for the mischief she hath caused, saying that the fault is not hers but the will of the Gods ; and the words given to the old men who watch her coming towards the Scæan gates : Small wonder that the Trojans and Achæans should endure so much and so long for the sake of a woman so marvellously and divinely lovely ! are true and significant that Helen hath always been looked upon by the Greeks as more than mortal. Brief are her visitations ; in sadness and mystery she comes towards us, inspiring every poet differently. In the poems until lately attributed to Homer we read that Paris did not take Helen to Troy but to Egypt, where he enjoyed her without weariness, and that the Helen of Troy who set Greek against Greek was but a wraith, a mischief. A warrant this story seems to me to be that the story-teller regarded Helen as one conceived and born for more than mortal purpose, and I look forward to telling such audiences as may collect round me that there are two Helens in the Iliad.

The first, a gift from the Gods sent to earth on a spiritual errand, will be the admiration of the few ; the second, a truant wife restored to her husband, will be the satisfaction of the many. And the world being always divided between the few and the many, the many will not trouble to distinguish between our war and the wars that preceded it, wars that the barbarians waged for tribute, extensions of territory, or slaves. Only the few will recognise our war as a war for an idea. . . .

Kebren stopped speaking, and waited for Otanes to ask him how it was that he had come upon this interpretation of the Iliad. But Otanes put no questions to him, and to break a silence that seemed to reflect upon the interest of the story he had told, he said : A sacred gift to Greece was stolen from Greece—— Not altogether from Greece, Otanes interjected, for Paris was a Greek, though not of the mainland. I have often wondered, said Biote, why we hear of the son of Priam as a shepherd on the heights of Mount Ida. He was exposed on Mount Ida, Kebren answered, because—but thoughts and words alike fail me. And he was helped by Timotheus from the hall, Otanes much concerned, saying : Unclothe him, or he'll fall asleep in his clothes, getting but a restless sleep in them. He is half asleep in my arms, master ; I am overburdened, Timotheus answered. Otanes went to his help, and together they laid Kebren in his bed. He will sleep for hours without moving, said Otanes. A man sleeps ill, master, with the ache of twelve leagues or more in his limbs. And it was not long afterwards that dreams began to rise and fade, leaving Kebren wearier than before.

He was playing the part of Agamemnon, and when he came to the celebrated passages, on which his fate with the audience depended, a dog began to bark. Nobody heard the dog except himself, and certain he was not mistaken he hunted the dog through the theatre and out of the theatre, finding himself at last on the heights above Dekeleia, waiting for a goatherd who had promised to bring him food and wine. But

there was neither in the goatherd's basket when he returned ; he had eaten all that his wife had put into it and drunk the flagon dry, and Kebren being without money to pay was threatened by the goatherd's wife and by another goatherd. An old man appeared, crying : Follow me ! and they ran on together seeking a cleft from which they might defend themselves ; but no sooner had they found one than the two goatherds and the woman began to build them into it with stones. Kebren looked for the old man, and saw him through a chink among his murderers ; he heard laughter and awoke, saying : A dream, only a dream ! And not daring to lay his head on the pillow lest the dream should return, he sat watching the window pass from darkness into light. The dawn hath come, he said, and fell back, to dream that he was walking in the woods above Dekeleia, where he came upon a great bird shaped like an eagle, of many varying colours, with a hooked beak, talking to himself on the wall of things to come. Wilt tell me what will befall me in Aulis ? he asked, bowing low to the bird, and he would have heard the course his life would take if a child had not come carrying a long pole on which there was a perch. On seeing the perch the bird flew from the wall on to it, and by some strange trick in the pole the child was able to swing the bird round and round, until bewildered by the motion he dashed himself against the wall.

As he began to bewail the bird's death the door opened and Timotheus entered, and he cried out : Why did the child kill the bird ? The bird ? Timotheus asked. A dream, only a dream ! Kebren muttered, and his mind clearing a little, he began to tell his dream, saying : A mad dream, a strange dream, yet signifying something. Canst find any hidden meaning in it ? I am no interpreter of dreams, sir, but there is at Tanagra an oracle of good repute. At Tanagra ? Kebren repeated. I met a wayfarer by the river Asopos who had been all over Greece seeking an interpretation of a strange dream. He was on his way to Lebadea, frightened he would not be

able to bear the tests that would be put to him. Perhaps the wayfarer passed his dream on to thee, sir. Kebren did not answer, and with a faint smile about his lips he wondered if a dream could pass from one dreamer to the next. If thou wouldst bathe, sir, I will conduct thee to the bath. There is a great stiffness in my limbs, Timotheus. A bottle of vinegar in the water is a help, sir ; and half-an-hour passed, Timotheus waiting with warm linen over his arm into which he enfolded Kebren, drying him all over, asking for his feet in turn. Art relieved ? he asked, and Kebren answered that his limbs seemed as lithe as they were when he set out from Athens. More than one bath is needed, sir, to restore liteness after a walk of a dozen leagues across a rough country—— This is not my shirt, Timotheus ! Thy shirt is being washed, the slave replied ; the master hath lent thee one of his. And whilst pulling the shirt over his head Kebren heard that Timotheus had shaken and brushed his clothes, freeing them from the dust of the long walk from Athens. Thy sandal straps have galled thy feet, sir ; thou'l walk easier in these loose slippers. I thank thee, Timotheus. By the master's orders, sir. In the hall thou'l find a repast laid for thee, and should there be something lacking that appeals to thy poor appetite (appetites need coaxing after a long journey) thou hast but to name it and search shall be made for it in the offices. . . . Here are plovers' eggs from the marshes round Lake Kopais, where the birds breed freely ; two or three of these will lead thine appetite to a chine of young kid, and cold kid and Chian are agreeably related. From this ornamental dish (moulded at Tanagra for spiced meats and such like) I will help thee. Quails ! See, one of these I lift out of its jelly. A quail then let it be to follow the plovers' eggs, Timotheus ; but wine is what I need most. A wine that brings a new access of appetite, Timotheus answered, and Kebren asked for another quail, finding a finer relish in the second bird than in the first.

As he rose from table Timotheus's words were that the

master had been called to his counting-house to attend to some important business, but would return when at liberty. I will await him in the courtyard by the fountain, Kebren called back, and sitting under the statue of Hermes he wondered if the end of his adventure would be a return to Athens on foot or a free passage to Cnidus in one of Otanes's ships. One or the other, he said, and his thoughts reverted suddenly to the moment overnight when Biote had asked him why Paris, the son of Priam, followed a flock on the heights of Mount Ida. Had my senses not failed me I could have told her, and after she had heard of Hekabe I could have picked up the thread of my lecture. Otanes would have liked to hear that Homer, by omitting the first nine years of the war, established the principle of unity which Aeschylus follows in the shaping of his tragedies, and Iktinos and Kallikrates in their designs for the Parthenon and the Erechtheion; I might even have been asked to read passages from Homer. But things have fallen out differently, and I may have to return to Athens on foot when my shirt is dry.

CHAPTER III

I WOULD have come to thy bedside this morning, said Otanes, if Timotheus had not assured me that thou wert still sleeping. I thank thee, sir, for the shirt. Thou'rt at thine ease in it? I would be, Kebren answered, if I were sure that thou didst not already rue our meeting on the wharf. Why should I rue it, Kebren? Our lives here, Biote's and mine, are not so eventful that we can afford to turn aside from a visitor. Her face often tells me plainly that she would welcome an event, and it is strange that I should have left the house yesterday in the expectation of an event. The galley would bring me news, good or bad, of that I felt sure. But it was the road from Athens that brought thee, and I was in the humour to leave the unloading of the galley to my head clerk and go

with thee in search of a lodging. I might easily have left thee at the door of "The Golden Fell," and thy presence here is owing to Biote's quickness of thought. He speaks kindly, Kebren said to himself, and when I tell him of my stiffness he'll not refuse to allow me to prolong my visit for some hours, perhaps for a day or two ; and wishing to have this point settled, he spoke of his breakdown of overnight, saying that it had come at the most inopportune moment—Just as I was going to tell that the principle of unity we admire in our dramatists and in our architects was first mooted in the Iliad. The barbarians have art, but they have not unity—— Yes, yes, Otanes interjected. That point was not omitted from thy lecture ; I was much struck by it. And the wish to understand each other better being mutual, Otanes proposed that they should sit on the bench of olive-wood under the statue, saying : There are many fine manuscripts in this house, but none finer than the one I saw upon thy knees last night. A present it was from my father, sir, before he turned me adrift, saying there was no fishmonger in me, which was true. So thy father was a fishmonger ? Yes, and once on a time the most successful in Athens. Once on a time, Kebren, is a bitter story. Once on a time is every man's story, so the poets tell us in the theatre, Kebren answered, and he was about to illustrate his meaning with quotations from the poets when Otanes said : We are not thinking now of the poets but of thyself. And thereby encouraged, Kebren continued :

My grandfather was in the shop before my father. An excellent fishmonger he was, and very proud of his son, in whom he saw a man that would develop the business, which my father did skilfully. And just as my grandfather had looked forward to begetting a good fishmonger, my father bethought himself of another fishmonger in me, and I was sent to the market with a slave very learned in fish, who taught me how to distinguish between the fresh and the doubtful. He could tell at a glance ; no monger could deceive him ; and as long as he was with me I brought fish to the shop that pleased

everybody, and my father said : Kebren, thou'rt a fishmonger as thy grandfather was and as thy father is. Thou canst dispense with thine instructor ; go to the market thyself. But, alas, that errand was a disastrous one ! The fish I brought back were tainted and my father told me that I could not have looked at them. I answered that I had, and he said : Then thou hast no eye to see, though thou mightest have smelt them. Or maybe thou hast no nostrils, or wert busy repeating odds and ends o Homer, making friends with anybody who knew a picce and would babble it in thine ear till thou hadst it by heart ! I was put under the charge of another slave, who was very sk lful in gutting and chopping fish, and I could do what I was old to do ; but when he was taken away from me I chopped and gutted so badly that my father put me to a further emploment, that of displaying the fish on a marble slab in a manner that would attract customers, and when my displays failed to attract the passers-by, my father would mutter to himself and rearrange the fish, saying : This is how they should be ! And then I could only appraise the fish artlessly, so artlessly that the customer often went away with a scowl on his face ; and another fault, worse than this in my father's eyes, was that I kept customers waiting. Seeking me all over the shop, and finding me in a corner reading, he could barely control himself, and this happening once too often, he said : I have tried thee in every branch of the trade and thou'rt a failure in all. There's no fishmonger in thee, nothing of thy grandfather, not to speak of myself. Wherefore get thee to thy fancy. And my fancy being poetry, I presented myself at the theatre, and because I was tall and thin and looked like a shepherd and could talk like one, I was engaged to play messengers. And thou hadst no liking for messengers ? Otanes asked. There are messengers that lend themselves to interpretation, Kebren answered, and there are other messengers that the poet hath not been at pains to humanise—— And with these the actor can do nothing ! Otanes interjected, bringing a smile to Kebren's

face. At what art thou smiling ? At the quick perception of one that hath never walked the boards, sir. I have read many plays, Kebren, and had I the casting of one I would select thee for a king. Thy head and shoulders—— Ah, speak not of them ! They have been my undoing in the theatre. How is that, asked Otanes, since we all look to find a fine head and shoulders in a king ? Yes, yes, Kebren replied, and being unwilling to bring charges of jealousy against his comrades of yesterday, he was puzzled to know how to continue his story. His hesitations put the thought into Otanes's mind that his guest was not so candid as he had judged him to be, and he plied Kebren with questions that Kebren could not answer without admitting, which he did very innocently, that a few days after his engagement as an actor he had talked recklessly of his father's wealth and of his ambition to play the part of Agamemnon.

As I had not distinguished myself at rehearsal that morning my ambition amused my comrades, and the legend grew that when I came into my inheritance I would spend it all in buying parts to which my small merit as an actor did not entitle me. The story might have lived and died quickly, like many another harmless joke, if it had not reached the ears of the manager, with the exact sum of money he was to receive for every leading part confided to me. It was not the manager's fault ; I acquit him of all blame. He had to defend himself, and the only way to prove these stories false was by giving the parts that should have come to me to others, and feeling that I was unjustly treated I was about to leave the theatre, when my father died on the verge of bankruptcy, having spent all the money he had made upon women from Corinth, building houses, and living riotously. When my ruin was no longer hearsay but a fact that could not be gainsaid, certain of my comrades regretted the scandal that had been set going about me and would have shown me some kindness in the future to make amends if I had remained in the theatre ; but when a man hath been discredited, whether he

be in the right or in the wrong, it is well for him to leave those who have plotted against him. The parts of messengers would still have been given to me, no doubt, but the pay of a messenger is a poor one. I was living in a small room on a loaf of bread a day and half-a-bottle of sour wine, and was weary of it. Yet it was not for the comforts of life that I left the theatre, but because in my poverty I had read Homer deeply and had discovered much that needed interpretation, and the only way for me to interpret Homer was to become a rhapsodist. I had a good voice, and inveigled by the desire to express the truth about Helen, paid for a passage in a ship bound for Cnidus and went to bed convinced that at noon I should be in the middle of the Aegean. But at noon, or after noon, I was asleep on the beach at Aulis. How was that? Otanes asked. At midnight a God spoke in my ear, saying : To Aulis ! To Aulis ! A voice spoke in thine ear, Kebren ! Yes, close by ; when I put out my hand there was nothing, yet the voice was so plain that I should know it if I were to hear it again. And before sleeping thou hadst no thought that a God might come to thy bedside, no feeling that something was about to happen ? No, sir, none. Which is strange, said Otanes, for yesterday, as I have told thee, I was full of forebodings, certain that another uneventful day would not go over. How can that be explained? By the fact that thou, too, wert in the mind of the God, Kebren replied. It may be as thou sayest, Kebren. And they spoke of Gods and oracles for a long time.

My good wife would have enjoyed our talk if she were here to listen to it. Never weary of embroidering stories of Gods and mortals was she, and she would have made a design for a tapestry out of what thou hast told me. All I have told thee, sir, is but the truth ; and Kebren waited for Otanes to continue. But Otanes was thinking of his wife and her embroideries, and of a phrase that he had heard her say : To complete the design of the Gods we have to put a stitch here and there. He had answered : In saying as much, Theano,

mayhap thou'rt not far from the truth, the Gods being free from human mortality. Immortal they are not, for their natures change or modify, and immortality they need not claim, for behind the Gods there is ineluctable Fate. It is hard, Kebren, to accept ourselves and all we see and hear as blind chance, for there seems to be a design ; yet when we seek the design we lose it. And the riddle, said Kebren, is not less when we look up to the stars and say : They are the dwellings of the immortal Gods, who descend occasionally to Mount Olympus to look after the affairs of men. Thereat we touch the two extremes of human thought, replied Otanes, and he began to speak of the wisdom of Mesopotamia and the star watchers of Babylon, Kebren giving as much attention as he could, afraid to interrupt lest he should harden Otanes's heart against him. At last the strain became too great for him to bear, and he asked : Does Biote incline to blind chance, or to the Gods in the stars and the Fate behind the Gods ? Women are not interested in the past or in the future, Otanes answered ; they live in the present time, and maybe they are right. But here is Timotheus.

A message, sir, from the lady Biote. A chill gotten in the courtyard last night will prevent her from being present at the reading this evening. My thought was to return to Athens this afternoon, Kebren struggled to say to Otanes, and said it somehow. Thou hast left the theatre for a long itinerary, Otanes answered, reading and interpreting Homer to all and sundry. Thine itinerary was planned to begin at Cnidus, but why Cnidus rather than Mitylene or Rhodes, or Aulis, whither the God directed thee ? And when Homer hath been read to us thou'l be better able to read him to others. There are twenty-four books of the Iliad, and easily thou canst read a book to us in an evening. But I will not press thee for an answer at once ; think of it until to-morrow. The generosity of thine offer, sir, takes me aback. I had not expected so much. A day longer in which to rest I had hoped for, no more. At the end of the month, Otanes continued, a fee will

be given to thee for thy reading, as much and more than thou wouldst have earned in the theatre, and one of my ships will take thee to the city that seems most favourable to thee. Now I must leave thee, for I am a little anxious about Biote. Thou'l find in my library the earliest manuscripts of the Homeric period, and in them per chance a clue to the ancient worship of Helen as a Goddess.

Otanes turned to go, and Keren hurried forward to open the door for him, afraid as soon as he had opened it that he had betrayed his secret wish to be left alone to consider and appreciate the good fortune that had fallen upon him from the skies—yes, from the skies, so miraculous did it seem that a man should pass from penury to affluence in the space of an hour. The word affluence gave him pause. At the end of the month, when the *Iliad* was read, he would step on board one of Otanes's ships with a heavy purse of money, and the ship would take him to whatever city seemed to him most favourable. And for an hour, or for a few minutes (it is hard to measure the duration of a dream), he lectured on the banks of the Eurotas at eventide. The shadow of the mountain lay steeped in the quiet water ; the crowd listened. . . . But why the Eurotas ? for the Spartans were not great readers of Homer, though indeed they had supplied the story of the burning of Troy and the rape of Helen ages ago. Why do I waste time thinking of Sparta and the Eurotas ? he asked himself, and quietly as an otter slides into the water he returned to the dream that lay ahead of him : the month he was to spend in this beautiful house, attended by slaves. An hour ago I was in imagination walking back to Athens, my weary limbs unable to bear the hardship of the way, afraid to spend half-a-drachma on a bottle of sour wine—as if it would have mattered whether I spent it or not ! I might have gone to the manager of the theatre and told him what had happened to me, and asked him to lend me the price of a passage—but why think of all these things ? I would think of nothing but the present moment, of this wonderful house that the God led

me to by the hand, as a parent leads a child.

A finer house it was certainly than any he had seen in Athens or heard of. In Athens everybody's money went into public buildings and nobody cared where he lived so long as public life was beautiful and chaste. But this Boeotian had put his money into his own house, in which he had lived with his beloved wife, and in which he now lived with his beloved daughter, Biote ! And Kebren was about to think of her when his eyes were captured by the sight of the spouting River-God in the middle of the courtyard, with two attendant nymphs holding their hands in the spray, and from them his eyes wandered to the dolphins and sea-horses with curling tails wallowing in a mosaic of blue and brown and white stones, united with red streamers from different parts of their bodies, giving a sense of life and movement. He asked himself whence Otanes had got the idea for this house in Aulis, and Egypt, Carthage, Syracuse, were explored, and then his thoughts turning northward, he remembered Dioscurias, whither the Persians sent caravans laden with ivories and dyed stuffs. Wherever he goes a great trader gathers ideas, and if he be a collector he collects everything. A wise God indeed it was that brought me to this house ! And his thoughts sobering a little, he bethought himself of the manuscripts, and thinking that he would do well to spend the morning in examining them, he strayed from the courtyard into the hall, where he stood lost in admiration of the hammer beams carved into figure-heads by a craftsman, till steps awoke him from his reverie.

The master, Timotheus, spoke to me of his library, but he was perplexed at the moment by memories of business at his counting-house and went away without taking me to it. The master remembered his forgetfulness at the last moment, sir, and gave orders that I should take thee to the library. A man that is truly worthy of his possessions ! Kebren muttered to himself, and when Timotheus had opened the chests, saying : Here are his treasures, he drew over a stool and

began his examination. All the works of Æschylus, Pindar, Chionides, Anacreon of Teos, are here, he said, and many other lesser-known but not unworthy writers. He brought his stool to another chest, where he found copies of the Iliad and the Odyssey, and it was not until he opened a third chest that he forgot everything except the manuscripts it contained. A cursive examination of these showed them to be of great antiquity. The poems written by the bards at the time of Homer, he said, rejected from the canon for one reason or another. I have often wished to read them, and if I should find proof in this chest that Helen was deposed unjustly, like Chronos, horizons will be thrown back. . . . His thoughts passed beyond his control, and when he awoke he could remember nothing. I might have been dead! he muttered, picking up another manuscript, and he continued to read till the light began to fail and Otanes returned from his counting-house. Reading in my library, Kebren, and diligently, I can see from the pile of manuscripts that have been already examined. Reading for mere pleasure of the words? or in search of some hint that will throw a light on Zeus's intention in seeking out Leda in the river—to gratify a brutal lust or to punish Athene for some fault committed on Parnassus? Thou hast said it, Kebren replied, overjoyed, and rising to his feet and setting his back against the tallest of the oaken chests, he stood as if addressing an audience. Speaking to one, but having many in his mind, he approached by gentle stages to an avowal of his belief that Helen had a claim upon the affections of the Athenian people equal to or nearly equal to Athene's. And without challenging the supremacy of her who gave the olive to Greece, he said, it seems to me that Greece will be a gainer, not by the substitution of one Goddess for another but by the resurrection of a Goddess from an unmerited oblivion, or at least a partial forgetfulness.

So that is thy creed! Otanes muttered. Art surprised? Kebren asked, abashed by the intonation rather than by the words. Not surprised, Kebren. Every young man should

think religion out for himself, else he will have none. I, like another, strove in my youth to reconcile the Gods and their sway. And as if urged by some secret need to confess himself, Otanes continued: I have not abandoned my dreams; the pressure of circumstance hath merely forced them underground. To rise up again, like a river, Kebren replied, and the proof of the ancient worship of Helen I shall find in these poems. His face became suddenly overcast. The very poem in which the poet speaks plainly of Helen's divinity may be lost, he said, burnt in Troy, perchance. Even so, the God that led me hither had thy library in his mind, for how long we may not proffer a guess—before it existed in thine, Otanes. I like to listen to thee, Kebren, for listening to thee brings back my youth. And they talked on, returning every now and then to the baffling, unanswerable question whether all is blind chance— Or stiches, Otanes interjected, in some great design that the Fates are weaving behind the Gods. We shall never get farther; the Fates were the beginning and will be the end of all, however we may think and puzzle. And then, like one who would escape from the Gods and their doings for a while, he asked Kebren if he did not find the verses of the elder poets rougher than the verses declaimed in the theatre at Athens. Certainly rougher, Kebren answered; verse is smoother now than it was. A gainer or a loser by the change? And Kebren, hesitating to declare a preference, replied: As Biote is not able to leave her room and would be hurt were I to spend the evening reading Homer to thee, I will read instead a play of Æschylus. Willingly indeed will I hear thee read the masterpiece, Otanes answered, but not now. In a few minutes Timotheus will announce the evening meal. Wherefore they talked on till the doors were thrown open, and during the meal it was debated whether Kebren should read the *Supplices* or *Prometheus Bound*, the choice falling to the *Supplices*. For the sake of the Chorus, Kebren said, as they rose from table. We will keep *Prometheus Bound*, the finer

play in many ways, until to-morrow. But Biote will be here, Kebren, and dialogue is not easily understood except by players. The best parts of the *Iliad* are in dialogue, sir.

And so it fell out that part of the *Supplices* was read that evening and talked over, Kebren commenting upon his reading and challenging the interpretations of other actors till the wicks began to smoulder in the oil and Otanes's thoughts turned to the business that await'd him in the morning at the counting-house. A very pleasant evening it hath been, he said, and to-morrow evening will be pleasanter, for Biote will be with us. Kebren had forgo ten her, and as he laid his head upon the pillow forebodings began to gather in his mind, but before an ugly thought appeared sleep intervened, and in the morning he hurried to meet Otanes, hearing already the many pleasant things his host would certainly have to say to him about his reading. But before Otanes opened his lips to speak, his face warned Kebren that his humour had changed. To ask him bluntly what had happened Kebren did not dare, and the meal continued in silence till Otanes said : Biote hath an attack of marsh fever, slight or serious Aglaia, her nurse, will not say. We shall have to wait three or four days to learn if her lungs be attacked. Her lungs attacked ! Kebren exclaimed. Thou'rt a stranger in Boeotia, Kebren, and hast no knowledge of the marshes round Lake Kopais. Whenever a west wind blows fever flies are carried hither. Many suffer and a few die, but the lake remains undrained, which is a pity, for the draining of it would give thousands of acres of the sweetest grass in Greece to many herds of kine. A tribe that was here before we were, drained part of the lake and was enriched by it, and the legend of the wealth of their city, Orchomenos, awakened hopes that the ruined canals might be rediscovered ; but we had the Persians to contend with. . . . He walked up and down the hall and along and across it without speaking, and Kebren wondered of what he was thinking. I ought to have sent her to Eubœa, to Mnasalceas, Otanes said at last, stopping before Kebren ; and

thinking that a remark was expected from him Kebren asked who was Mnasalcas. A sheep-farmer, Otanes answered. and from his talk, which quickly became incoherent, Kebren learned that Acamas, Mnasalcas's father, and Otanes were comrades in boyhood and had laid nets for wild-fowl in the Lelantus, and for that and other reasons they had traded together in many seas. His words stumble on, Kebren said to himself, but his mind is away. Timotheus came to say that Otanes's head clerk desired to speak with him, and Kebren was glad when Otanes hurried past, leaving him to make the acquaintance of Timotheus.

The master bumped past me as if I were a person of no consequence, and it is true I am of none. I am a slave like my father before me, and my child after me, if I had one. But I do not complain ; indeed, I would hardly change my lot. All the same, Timotheus, it is not like Otanes to bump past thee? He would not have done so, sir, if he were not in the midst of a great grief. Thou art right, Timotheus. And the contentedness of Timotheus with his lot opening Kebren's eyes to the slave, he noticed that he was almost a dwarf, but without deformity, standing on the smallest feet he had ever seen on a man. He cannot have fetched much in the market, he thought, and later he admired the slave's thick brown hair running over his head in curls. Timotheus spoke in a thin, obsequious voice, breaking every now and then into a little giggle. No Greek is he, Kebren said to himself, but no worse for that—a pleasant little fellow. And feeling drawn to the slave, he took him into his confidence, saying : The master was telling me about Mnasalcas and his sheep-farm. Timotheus responded at once to the invitation to gossip, and Kebren heard from him that Mnasalcas's flocks comprised hundreds of sheep, and that he and Otanes divided great sums of money between them for the growing and the exportation of the wool. His stead stands on the upper reaches of the Lelantus, and one day—but I am called away ; thou must excuse me, honoured sir. Thine ears are quick, Timotheus ; I heard

nothing. Timotheus smiled at the compliment. My hearing is as good as it ever was, he cried back, and Kebren turned again to his reading, but wearying he laid down the manuscript to ponder, his thoughts returning to Timotheus, whom he now looked forward to meeting at the midday meal. But Timotheus did not serve it, and the slave who replaced him being without liveliness of mind or wit, Kebren opened his manuscript again and read till Timotheus came to ask him at what hour he would like the lamps to be lighted. He answered : Not yet, and continued reading. At last he said : A call came for thee, Timotheus when thou wert about to tell me a story. To tell thee a story, sir ? Yes, about the upper reaches of the Lelantus ; and Kebren waited for the slave to recover his memory.

The master and I often went to the Lelantus to lay nets for wild-fowl, and one day on hearing a girl singing in the woods he bade me beach the boat. But to hear without seeing was not enough for the master, and singing he went in search of the singer, and their blending voices coming very happily over the reeds to me, I gathered the nets into the boat, wondering if he was singing with Theano, the pretty shepherdess whose fame had reached Aulis. But Otanes knew nothing of her fame ; the meeting was his luck ; and we returned towards Aulis, Otanes looking like one that hath come upon a Goddess in the woods. Such was my reading of him, and whilst pulling an oar I said, speaking inwardly : He'll never love another if he doesn't get her. All this I can vouch for, sir, but not for the story that hath been told ever since in the town. Theano, so it is said, was waiting for him next day at the spot where he had left her, and together they went in search of Evelthon, whom she was to marry. But he wasn't in his stead, nor on his farm. And finding her lover gone, said Kebren, she stepped into Otanes's boat ? Thou hast said it, replied Timotheus. And I have revealed no secret, sir, but have told only what everybody knows and what Otanes himself would have told thee if he were given to

speaking of the dead. I have never heard him mention her name since she died. Months went by without a smile ever coming on his face, and it is of grief he would have died if she had not left him the honourable lady Biote to live for. If she were to die of the fever she caught overnight he'd take his life and we'd be sold, but who would sell us and who would buy us I know not. He might enfranchise us if he knew the time of his death, but death is often sudden. After his death who will live in this house ? and what will become of the tapestries that Theano wove ? Everything here is Theano's, sir. The manuscripts thou art reading, the pavement in the courtyard, and all the vases and statues that came from Tanagra were brought here by her, and many marbles from Attica. She was the spirit, and Otanes the hand that obeyed the spirit If the lady Biote were to die—— But there is little chance of her dying, Timotheus ? To my mind none at all, the slave answered. Nobody believes that she will succumb to a touch of marsh fever, nobody but Otanes. The thought is always in his head, a buzzing thing like a bee or wasp—— Or fly, Kebren interjected. He is unhappy when the wind blows from the west, Timotheus continued, and regains his humour only when it blows from the north.

Timotheus filled the lamps from his oil can, set the wicks floating, lighted them, and after loitering a while wandered out of the room, leaving Kebren to the enlightenment of his thoughts, and the day ended on a glimpse of Otanes's scared face and the question : What will become of me if Biote should die and Otanes kill himself ? Timotheus being a slave is despondent, he said to himself, and when the little man came into the library, quietly as a mouse, Kebren tempted him into talk, and learnt from him that Aglaia was disliked by slaves and servants alike. For days she would not answer a question, and on other days she would talk incessantly if she could find a listener. The cook, too, had been a great trial some years ago. A bad cook, Timotheus ? A bad cook if she is ill-tempered, a good cook in her humour, but never pleased with

her kitchenmaids. And he told a long story of how many had been set to other work by Otanes to satisfy the cook. The worst that can be said about the master is that he always chooses the easiest way out of every difficulty ; things became worse and worse, and ended in an open revolt about three years ago. The food being served up improperly cooked time after time, Otanes asked me what was happening in the kitchen. Antibia never sent up food like this before, he said ; and I had to tell him that the cook could not do her work on account of her arm having been scalded. Scalded ? said the lady Biote. How did she manage that ? she asked, and went away to the kitchen to find out. A kitchenmaid had thrown boiling water at the cook. When upon the maid was ordered to beg the cook's pardon, and the honourable lady mentioned to me that I was to make the necessary arrangements for the whipping. After the whipping things went on pleasantly enough, the cook and the kitchenmaid living in outward peace, whatever they may have thought inwardly. Now I must leave thee, sir, to study the text of to-night's reading. I wish thou couldst tell me, Timotheus, which he would prefer to hear, Homer or *Prometheus Bound*. Thou art the better judge of what touches on learning, sir ; only this can I tell thee, that the lady Biote—— Will not be present, Kebren interjected. In that case I will take the *Prometheus* from the chest. I will leave thee, sir, to thy studies. Kebren smiled and bent his head over the manuscript, but the time and attention that he gave to it availed him nothing. Otanes consented to the reading, but all the while he wore a troubled look and Kebren could see that his thoughts were elsewhere. Doubtless with Biote, he said to himself, fearful lest she might follow her mother to the grave. And to help Otanes to forget his fears, which he knew were not justified by the circumstance, Kebren seized the pretext that the play afforded to explain how it shaped out on the stage ; but he only partially succeeded, and began to suspect that Otanes's taste for poetry was but superficial.

Two evenings more passed away in anecdote, and on the third evening Otanes came to meet him smiling so pleasantly that his face told all he had come to tell : that Biote was herself again. Already she is in Eubœa in her thoughts, Otanes continued ; she knows the island of yore, having gone there in her childhood to recover from the whooping-cough. Thine assurances are welcome, though not unexpected, Kebren replied. From the beginning I did not doubt that her illness was not much more than a passing indisposition. And this being so, I would crave two days of absence from thy house ; I would visit Thebes. If thy visit to Thebes is connected with Pindar, said Otanes, it will be in vain. Not long since Pindar went to live in Thessaly. And I am not sure that thou wouldest find him in Thessaly, he added ; I have heard that he hath followed the banished Æschylus, and that the exiles have at last found peace and content at the court of Hieron, a great patron of poets. Even if I may not see Pindar himself, Kebren answered, I would see his house and the pavilion at the end of the garden where he wrote his odes. Thou dost not answer, Otanes. If my visit to Thebes is not convenient to thee I will postpone it until the week before I leave Aulis. My daughter is going to stay with Mnasaleas and his wife Leto. The greatest sheep-farmer in Eubœa is Mnasaleas. I sell his wool eastward up and down the Euxine and westward as far as Sicily. Mnasaleas and Leto are excellent people, true friends of mine, but Biote looks on them as rustics, and I am afraid she will lose her temper during the long evenings of simple talk. They will call in the shepherds, but flute-playing for a whole evening will be wearisome, and Biote would certainly like to hear thee read the great chariot race aloud. Even the shepherds would like to hear the chariot race read. A postponement of thy visit to a later date will be an advantage, for Pindar may return to Thebes. What thinkest thou, Kebren ? I shall be glad indeed to visit the island of Eubœa, Kebren answered ; and it was in talk of an oracle of good repute

among the foot-hills that Otanes and Kebren retired to their different couches.

CHAPTER IV

HE stood in the stern of the boat waiting to hand her into it. The cushions she would rest upon during the little voyage were already arranged, and as father and daughter came down the wharf he bethought himself of the differences they presented to the eye, saying : Who would guess the tall, handsome man, with a look of kindly interest in everything he sees, to be her father ? Her open, smiling countenance comes to her doubtless from her mother, likewise her tip-tilted nose, her short upper lip, and the soft blonde ringlets falling like vines about her face. Said Otanes : Do not jump rashly, Biote ; beware of sending the gunwale to the edge of the water, mayhap swamping the light skiff. I shall alight in the middle of the boat, father ! and she did, to Otanes's admiration and the displeasure of Photius, the old boatman, who sat in the bow like a figure of stone, mindful only of his oars. I commit her to thy charge, Kebren. Remember that at the mouth of the Lelantus, Mnasalcas's mule-cart will be waiting to take you to the stead. A week will restore my Biote to her usual health. I shall expect you back in a week, in less. Say on what day, father, and at what hour of the day thou wilt expect me ! Otanes and Kebren exchanged glances, and Photius plied his oars, but the boat was barely in midstream when somebody appeared running down the wharf. What can we have forgotten ? Biote cried, and Kebren feared the scolding that Timotheus would receive. What have we forgotten, Timotheus ? For lack of breath the slave could not get out his words, but at last they came : The cock ! Take him ; he is in this basket.

I should like to see him clap his wings and salute the sunrise, said Biote. Thou'lt see him clap his wings and crow

when we take him to the temple, Kebren replied, and she would have asked him what day was appointed for the sacrifice if the Euripos had not claimed her attention. I have seen the strait all my life, she said, but never so beautiful as this morning, and thou who hast never seen it before, worship, and let the silver Euripos fix itself in thy memory. We have no mountain ranges in Greece as beautiful as the Eubœan hills, Biote. Whereupon she took pleasure in telling him all she knew about the plain and the hills, saying : I am glad I am with thec when the sun shines so prettily on the Euripos, for it was on just such a day that we travelled in an ox-wagon from Mnasalcas's stead to the chestnut-woods that gather about the foot-hills, bringing with us staves to beat the trees. As we beat and the shucks fell about us we caught sight now and then of the pines and the white cap of Dirphys ; he rarely doffs his cap before the summer heats. If thine eyes follow the direction of my finger—but of what art thou thinking, Kebren ? Of Cnidus and thy lectures ? My thoughts were adrift in the sleeping water and in the clouds below and above it, he answered. The water needs clouds as sleep needs dreams. Day dreams or night, Kebren ? Day dreams are surer, he replied. And thou, Biote, of what art thou thinking ? Of the clouds above or beneath the water ? Of neither, Kebren, but of an air-born spirit of such tender touch and so sweet-smelling that I have no thought for anything else. Her robe is steeped in sweetness, and her hair ; she hath passed through a bower of honey-suckle ; and she woos me because she thinks that thou art belike in Cnidus. But think not of her, lest she woo thee and desert me, for thou'rt a man and she is a Goddess come out of the winter snows, returned to earth and enraptured by its beauty. Let her kiss thee ; I shall not be jealous. Pretty Zephyr, go to him and kiss him, for I would have him happy to-day, and of all, breathe a forgetfulness over him of Cnidus and the Iliad. Kebren, if thou wouldest not be wooed by the zephyr, look down into the water and a nymph will rise to thy lips.

What, the water does not tempt thee ? It tempts me ! And Biote would have unloosed her girdle if Kebren had not put his hand on her shoulder, saying : A few days ago thou wert fever-stricken. Were a current to carry thee away, how could I return to Aulis and to thy fa her ? Thou must return to Aulis, and many times, she answered, and when the boat entered a sunny inlet she begged him to say if it were not true that there was no country in the world like Greece. We know of none other, Biote, but in no country did a day dawn more beautiful than the one we are breathing. A fish flopped from the cool depths. To glimpse the world above the wave, said Biote ; and the slim dragon-flies that flit and hover on gauzy wings, each on his business or his pleasure, enjoy the morning as we do. Didst ever catch dragon-flies, Kebren ? Kebren remembered chasing dragon-flies, and giving a small to a greater for food. The great fly with the dragon-like head devoured his brother from the tail to the wings, he said. What happened afterwards he could not remember, and the memory shaming him in his own eyes, and perhaps in Biote's, he spoke of the mule-cart that would take them to Mnasalcas's sheep-farm and back to the mouth of the Lelantus when their visit was ended. Do not talk of returning to Aulis, Kebren, before the boat bumps ashore !

I like an old road better than a new, she said, and the road the cart bumped over was altogether to her humour, rutted and overgrown ; and watching it the thought was often with her that the country on the other side of the woods might be different from the side they were leaving. But it was always the same, a hard, rocky land to which trees clung tenaciously and withered before old age was upon them. Here and there the woodmen had left an oak, twisted and deformed by sea winds, as unfitted for their purpose. I have not been here since I was a child, Kebren, and the day I was here the hills echoed with the thud of axes and the crashing of trees, long gone into the keels and the masts and the planks of galleys. My father's fleet of merchant ships came out of these rough

lands. And the mule-cart moving on through a denser skirt of forest brought them at the end of an hour's driving to an opening where no trees grew at all, perhaps had never grown, only rocks thrown about as by an earthquake, said by Biote to be a trysting-place for witches on moonlight nights ; and though Kebren affected an indifferent ear, he heard, perforce, her memories of an old woman who had told her when she was a child that witches came from Thessaly. Taking their inspiration from the moon, Kebren, they stripped themselves naked and rubbed their bodies with ointment till bristles began to grow, and very soon their arms and legs were transformed into paws ; then ears and snouts appeared and long white teeth. But, said the terrified Kebren, Thessaly is more than thirty leagues from here ! Thirty leagues is nothing to a wolf, she answered, a little trot. Leaping and scrambling over the rocks they gathered in circles to debate the flocks that were to be harried, the women that were to die in childbirth, the dreams that were to enter into men's minds to drive them mad, and many divers things that are the main concern of witches. She hath not told thee yet, said the muleteer, of the bitch-wolf, the leader of the pack, in love with a young shepherd, and craving for him all the time of the journey from Thessaly, so that leaving her comrades to debate what mischief they should be busy on during the winter months (murrain and other plagues they called down from the moon, their ally always), she would seek out Pholus, the young shepherd, one of the shapeliest in these hills, a kindly youth that never spoke a word against anybody, not even against witches—— I cannot listen to these stories ! Kebren cried. I will leave the cart and walk beside it, Biote, whilst thou givest ear to barbarous tales. If thou hast no belief in witches, Kebren, keep thy seat, for the story the muleteer would tell is no concern of thine. Walk with me, Biote, and let the muleteer tell the story of Pholus to his mules. I would hear the story, she answered, for it is one that my nurse kept from me. I would not frighten a friend of Mnasaleas, my

master, with the story of the rape of Pholus, said the muleteer, turning in his seat. Tell thy story, Kebren replied.

The lady Biote hath told thee of the magic ointment and the galloping of the wolves out of Thessaly till they came to Aulis, whence they crossed over into Eubœa, and the end of the story, sir, may be more frightful in thy mind than it will be in my words. Wherefore to rid thyself of it hear how in those times the shepherds were wont to gather within barred doors, afraid to talk lest the witches should hear them, whispering faintly to each other : Our sheep are folded, safe against wolves, but witches in the guise of wolves have power to climb the highest hurdles. So were they talking one night when one of the company remembered the witch that came down from Thessaly again and again, so great was her craving for Pholus ; and remembrance falling upon Pholus, too, of the endeavours of the witch to catch him, he stopped playing his pipe. His comrades, guessing his thoughts, said to themselves : The hag is nosing him out ! and the thought had barely come into their minds when a whine announced her outside the hut. Our dogs have missed her smell ; she touched their noses with a feather dipped in magic as she passed, said an old man who had seen much of witches ; and the shepherds waited. She is scratching at the door, said the old man, and as none answered came a howl and he said : We must put Pholus beyond the door. Let him settle with his wolf-bitch as well as he may. We must keep ourselves to ourselves and our flocks for our masters. Put me not out to her ! Pholus cried, and they answered : She'll not harm thee, whom she loves, and if thou goest not she'll call all the pack to tear down the windows and shutters and devour us. Get thee gone ! Get thee gone ! And holding the door against the wolf, the shepherds thrust Pholus out and a great silence fell upon them. We did wrong to thrust him out, said a shepherd ; we should have fought the wolves. There may be fifty, said another, and we are but six here. True, true, the comrades answered ; and our dogs—see how they cower

and whine, nosing the witches out, though to the eye they are like other wolves. But there are young women amongst witches, said a shepherd, and so great is her craving for Pholus that she may be young and Pholus the lucky one of our company. . . . Be that as it may, Pholus was seen no more, the muleteer added, and rousing up his animals he persuaded them to leave off grazing and to continue the journey.

A horrible story ! Kebren muttered. Many a time, said the muleteer, have these witches disguised themselves as wolves to get the sons of men that found favour in their eyes. Art satisfied, Biote, with the tale ? Kebren asked. She did not answer, and the muleteer, feeling that stories of the Eubœan hills were out of the Athenian's humour, stopped his mules in the middle of a wood. A pretty wood indeed, said Biote, with a dry bank to sit on whilst we eat our midday meal. When you have eaten and rested, the muleteer replied, follow the path along the brook till you come to the meadow in which my mules will soon be munching, and myself munching, too, in the best covert I can find. Here is the meal, he continued, tied in the parcel just as the old waterman gave it to me : cheese and bread-and-butter and slices of cold kid, and a bottle of wine. I see they have not forgotten to add dried raisins and almonds to the banquet ! . . . A talkative and not unpleasant muleteer, if it were not for his stories of sorceresses, Kebren said. But we cannot let him away without sharing some part of our meal with him. And calling back the muleteer he gave him some slices of kid and a piece of cheese. Thy words were : A pretty wood, and it merits thy praise, Biote, for it's neither spare nor thickly crowded, and under this great bough we shall find shade in which to eat our meal.

The hot morning had hushed the thrushes in the grove, the larks in the sky, the linnets in the bushes, and drawing their hats over their eyes after the meal they would have dozed if the chortling and scratching of the cock had not kept them awake. We might quiet him with some crumbs thrust into his basket, Biote said from under her hat ; or maybe he is

thirsty. Kebren, go to the brook for water. And when he returned they lay expecting sleep to overtake them every minute. The brook flowed with a drowsing murmur, broken occasionally when the current divided round a stick in the middle of it, and their speech taking tune from the water, they talked languidly, asking each other questions, and might have slept if Biote had not asked Kebren if she spoke with a Boeotian accent. Thy speech would betray thee to an Athenian, was his incautious answer. Why art thou with me if my accent is offensive ? Thy speech is correct, Biote, even to the particles, which we sometimes neglect in Athens. Always Athens ! she cried, and she lay quite still, waiting for further reproofs. She is reproving me in her dreams, if she be dreaming, he said, and when she rose to her feet and went in search of the irises that still bloomed in wet places, she talked as if the question of accent, the Attic and the Boeotian, had never arisen, and he understood that it was characteristic of her to pass easily, almost unconsciously, from violent temper into happy reconciliation. Returning to him with her arms full of flowers, she asked : Where did the muleteer tell us to look for him ? In the green field through which the brook flows, Biote. Then let us go thither. And coming upon him under some bushes out of the sun's way, she said : Rouse him with thy foot and inquire where he hath hidden the flagon. The muleteer answered : Water from the brook ! and staggering after his mules, he said : I shall have to take you all the way up these green links, for there's but one cart-track through the forest. At the crack of the whip the mules shook their long ears and fell into a homeward trot, leaving the muleteer to sleep or to wake as he pleased, and Kebren and Biote to exchange remarks about the beauty of the forest through which they were passing.

We have passed a circle of acacia-trees, said Kebren. The beech, too, is of the woodland, she replied, and under beechen branches we meet with no gloomy dells, nor rocks, nor scathed and twisted roots. trysting-places for crows and ravens ; and

then forgetful of these swarth birds she pointed to ferns uncurling, saying : By moonlight and noonlight nymphs and satyrs play here for certain and bathe in the pools. As if to vindicate her imagination a secluded pool in which maidens were splashing came into sight. Maidens come from yon village, the muleteer said, pointing with his whip. But without heeding him Biote began to speak of a tapestry that she and her mother had worked at during the last six months of Theano's life. In our tapestry there was a pool in which Diana's nymphs were bathing, she standing among high rocks indignant that Actæon should have violated her privacy. Mother was sorry that we could not include the incident of the changing of Actæon into a stag, hunted by his own hounds, and when I said that it was a subject for another tapestry she looked at me sadly, asking me to say truly if I thought we should be able to finish the one we were working on. Yes, mother, we shall, I answered her. Why she should have set such great store on the finishing of the tapestry I do not know ; her last strength was given to it. But death came quicker than we expected, and the unfinished tapestry is now rolled up in a cupboard. I often think of unrolling it and finishing it in memory of her, but something holds me back.

The mule-cart jolting from rut to rut interrupted from time to time her memories of her mother and her life with Aglaia, with whom she used to walk in the forests on the way to Thermopylæ, learning the names of the trees and the birds, and Kebren listened, enchanted by her laughter, in which there was always a note of sadness. Of what art thou thinking ? she asked, breaking off suddenly, and he answered that he was thinking of the folk of every city coming out at even-tide to hear her telling stories. If I were a rhapsodist, Kebren ; and while she sought for other little narratives that would justify his opinion of her, the mule-cart plunged into deeper ruts, the axle-tree breaking at last. We are still a league from Mnasalcas's house, said the muleteer, and the time passed wearily for Kebren and Biote, watching the tethered

mules and speaking empty words till he returned with a wheelwright. The mending of the axle-tree took longer than they expected, and when it was mended the mule-cart had to proceed with great care. We could walk faster ! said Kebren, and Biote, at the end of her patience, begged to be allowed to walk ; but Kebren protested, saying : The cart moves slowly down the track, and to stop the mules for thee to alight, and to stop them again for thee to climb back, will delay us. With a sigh she approved his decision, and her interest in the journey did not revive until the muleteer told them that during the summer heats Mnasalcas and his wife left their house to live in a grove of plane-trees hard by As soon as the sound of my wheels reaches his ear he'll lift a branch and come to meet us. . . . Here he comes !

Yes, here he comes, Mnasalcas replied, overjoyed to see his old friend's daughter. The muleteer hath told us, said Biote, that during the summer months a grove of plane-trees serves you for a house. And he told you truly ! said Mnasalcas. Come into our summer-house. This is Kebren, our guest in Aulis, said Biote. Ah, here is Leto ! My wife, said Mnasalcas, turning to Kebren, Biote's friend almost from childhood. So thou hast come to us again, said Leto, this time to be cured of marsh fever. The reeds yonder are never free from it. But thy looks belie the sickness When did it take thee ? In the courtyard, replied Biote. We'll leave them to their chatter, said Mnasalcas ; let us to the open hillsides. Women have always much to talk about, and they talk more pleasantly in our absence. He lifted a bough to tempt Kebren with the sight of the pastoral. On the plain and on the foot-hills I am reputed a good walker, but Otanes writes that I had better not match myself against thee. Twelve leagues over a rough country try a man's legs. They tried mine, Kebren answered. Otanes tells me that thou art a great actor from Athens. An actor I was, Mnasalcas, but never a great actor. Learned in Homer, Mnasalcas continued. It is plain to thee, however, as to everybody, that

no man can do more than one thing in his life. I look to sheep, Otanes to shipping ; so do we live and thrive. But I have other sheep that I am prouder of than these ; we shall come upon them presently. And they trudged on, Kebren trying to come to some comprehension of his companion, Mnasalcas eluding him at every turn as might an inscription in an almost unknown language.

And not knowing whether to direct his eyes to the mountains, the forests, or the fields, and afraid to discern beauty or ugliness in the yoes and rams, and feeling talk to be needed, however uniform of purpose it might be, Kebren said : We are all three tall men, thou, Otanes and I. Mnasalcas answered that he had met taller men but not many, and Kebren continued to admire in awkward silence his companion's great feet and long legs. Mnasalcas raised his hat and mopped his face without complaining of the heat. A great red face, tanned by the sun to the colour of copper, said Kebren to himself. A clever man on his own lines, who never varies from himself, well liked by the shepherds for his knowledge of sheep and for his fine, broad shoulders. Now, here is my ram, said Mnasalcas, and I am proud of him ; and here is a flock of fifty waiting for him. These animals are not like men ; they think not of each other till breeding-time is upon them ; and then they are very much as we are, ram after yoe and yoe after ram. And wondering whether Mnasalcas would understand him, Kebren said : A flock on a sunny hillside, every yoe with her lamb beside her, carries a meaning that I cannot put into words (a great poet might), a sense of perfect security, fidelity, destiny and duty. It is a bad yoe that neglects her lamb, Mnasalcas answered, and we have a job sometimes to persuade one that hath lost her lamb to accept a lamb that is not hers. But methinks we are near to folding-time. Before long thou'l see our shepherds at work with their dogs. Shepherds are not as good walkers as they are reported to be, but they can stand watching the flock hour after hour, a thing which I never could do myself. And they

talked on in this fashion, passing the time with casual remarks about the flock before them, till Mnasalcas said : Now the shepherds arrive with their dogs at their heels, and the folding begins. Watch the dogs working : every dog knows his own woes, and if one is missing he'll not stop seeking till he hath found her. See that black dog—the great circle he is making to get ahead of the sheep and to bring them into the fold. They will be hot this night, said Kebren, and Mnasalcas replied that they were a little late that year with the shearing. It begins to-morrow or the day after. Our shepherds are fairly good, but we expect a great shearer from Chalkis. Yonder I see Leto.

On their way towards her they stopped that they might better hear her words : Supper is late this evening ; come ye to our help ; and all working together, a long table was raised on trestles in the grove and covered with smoked tunny-fish, cold kid and lamb, cheeses, and jugs of wine—a plentiful fare which the servitude and numerous shepherds sat down to after their day's labour. A little while for digestion, said Leto, but when the belly is filled, the ear craves ; and taking a flute she blew a few notes, saying as she handed back the flute to the shepherd : The muses are awake. And the shepherds played and sang singly and in concert, Discos showing such skill in playing on the double flute that the company applauded. He takes the prize every year, Leto said, and she called upon Discos for the well-known ditty with which he collected his cows and brought them home. The tune was repeated again and again, till Biote wearied of it, and catching sight of the muleteer that had brought them from the Lelantus hidden away in a corner still busily grubbing, she called upon him to tell the end of Pholus, who was carried away by a Thessalian witch. Give me time, noble lady, to chew these grapes else I choke ! the muleteer answered, and when they were munched he said : I know no more than I have told thee already. Whereupon Biote related the story she had heard from him, and turning to the shepherds asked if there was not

one amongst them who knew the end of Pholus. At first there was no reply, and then a great nudging and whispering began, and the whispering passing into words she learnt that Leontion, an old shepherd of the company, was given to telling that Pholus had chosen to remain a wolf in the forest. At the sound of his own name old Leontion shrank into the darkness of a bough, out of which he was dragged by a comrade. Since the honourable lady would hear thy story, on to thy legs with thee, or else be thought an old curmudgeon, good for naught but the dish of tunny and the wine flask ! A wonderful end truly, said Leontion, true or false, like Homer himself, but afeard am I to tell the story lest evil should come of it. At last, pressed by Biote and the shepherds, he began:

The story told in my country is that when Pholus was turned out of the hut the old witch said : Thou'l not be able to run with me to Thessaly if I do not change thee into a wolf ; and she uttered a lot of little growls and yelps that have a meaning for witches in Thessaly and the power to change men and women into animals. Nor was she long muttering her spells when Pholus's arms began to sprout into paws, hair grew thickly all over him, and his head became as a wolf's head, pointed, with eyes close together. A wolf he was, and a great story is told by a harpist in my country of the twain galloping over hills, lying down to rest in the dales, and feeding on whatever came their way, hares and rabbits, kids and goats, for they were not minded to return to Thessaly that night, Pholus's strength having given out. I have not got the tale of their adventures, and if I had we should all be here till the stars began to dwindle ; but I know well the end of the tale, which is what ye need, and the end is in Thessaly. Soon after their arrival the old bitch said : Now I'll turn myself into a woman ! and rubbing herself all over with another ointment, the bristles soon began to fall off her and she was the ugliest thing that human eyes ever beheld, knock-kneed, pot-bellied, with flat thighs and breasts like little long sacks reaching nearly to her navel, all her lovely

wolf's teeth gone and yellow fangs in their places. But being ardent as ever, she cried : Now I would know thee in my new shape ! and she advanced so eagerly to embrace Pholus that he shrank back and then sprang upon her, biting her through the throat, which he was able to do, for she had left him as a wolf—a big oversight for her, bu . even witches forget things sometimes, as hath long been k own. And is that the end of the story ? Biote asked. Nol le lady, the end is the best bit of all, and it must be true, s · natural does it seem. All the witches in the neighbourhooc heard the old hag's screams and came to her help, and seeing there was no breath left in her they stripped themselves nak d and danced round Pholus, crying : We'll turn thee back into a man, but thou must choose which one of us thou'l t be with. The wolf that was Pholus looked them all over, and seeing them as ugly as the witch he had killed—deformed, lame, hunch-backed (a frightful sight they were dancing naked round him) and thinking he couldn't kill them all, he hopped over the rocks, pursued for a while by the witches but outstripping them. In the forest he mated with a bitch-wolf, and brought kids and lambs to the cubs to eat when the bitch was weary of them and would not have them any longer on her dugs. Wolves in appearance they were, like their parents, but without wolfish instincts, gentle and docile, becoming faithful watchers to a shepherd, taking a liking to the folding of sheep in the twilight and the guarding of them from night-prowlers, so that the master became richer than any other shepherd, rarely losing a sheep, and the new breed was much sought after. . . . A sorry world it must have been for men before the dog left his kin, said Mnasalcas. Fill your cups with wine and drink to the health of man's best friend ! And the health being drunk, tales were told of the care of the dog for sheep, and his knowledge of his master's sheep, able to pick them out of another flock into which they had strayed on their way back from the fair. Comic stories mingled with serious, an addle-pated boy telling a story he had heard from his grandfather

of a dog that chased a wolf for thirty-three leagues and in the last lap lay down to die, but was tended by the wolf, that brought him water. How did he bring water? was asked, and the addle-pated boy answered: I suppose he must have brought it in his mouth, at which everybody made merry, till eyelids began to droop and Mnasalcas said: We to our couches and the shepherds to the folds.

On these words the servitude began to clear the grove of the supper-table and to lay down rugs and pillows where the four might sleep, a double couch for Mnasalcas and Leto and two single couches for Kebren and Biote. Within talking distance, said Mnasalcas, if ye be so minded; but talk with hushed voices, for Leto and I would sleep. We, too, would sleep, Biote answered; but they strove after sleep vainly whilst the grove darkened, kept awake by restless thoughts and the heavy breathing of Mnasalcas and Leto. Rugs were thrown aside, so ill at ease were they under them, and the silence and the darkness they endured, each wishing for the other to speak, till at last Biote's voice sounded in Kebren's ear: Kebren, I am frightened! The stories that we heard the shepherds tell of witches are running in my head, winding and unwinding and beginning again. Speak a little word to me, for I am truly frightened. Shall I awaken Leto and Mnasalcas? he asked, and she answered: How could Mnasalcas save us if the witches came? I was for stopping the muleteer in his story, Biote, but thou wouldest hear it, and afterwards the story of the dancing witches— Ah, Kebren, do not reproach me; I am frightened. Take my hand. Thy hand is cold, Biote, yet the night is warm! And he, too, was frightened, a little of the witches and a great deal of the north wind coming and going out of the grove, laden with sweet resin from the pines on the mountains and retaining the savour of the sea it had come over. A witch indeed is this wind! he said to himself, and if it persists I shall take her in my arms. And then? Again came the witch wind, but the arm was no longer there, and the impulse to go to her weaken-

ing and the motive of his life strengthening, he said : Had I taken her arm my life would no longer have been my own.

The cock they had brought to offer to Æsculapius shrilled in his basket. Kebren waited, hoping the bird would return to sleep, but he shrilled again and again, and a night robbed of thought and of sleep becoming unendurable, Kebren caught up the rug that he had no need of and covered the basket, saying : In the feigned darkness he will believe that the steeds of Apollo have returned to their stables, tuck his head under his wing and sleep again.

CHAP'I ER V

SEEING Biote girdling before a hand-mirror when he opened his eyes, he asked her if she had slept, and she answered him Of course ; why not ? Had it not been for me, Biote, thou wouldst not have slept ; and he told her how he had cheated the cock, adding : He is still asleep under my rug, so well does it imitate the night. Tie thy sandals, Kebren, and I will go in search of Leto, gone to the woods to milk the she-goat.

Hast given him to drink ? Mnasaleas asked her, and Leto coming at that moment from the woods, handed Biote a jug of milk, saying : Freshly drawn it is from the udder As soon as I have watered the cock we shall be ready to start, for I would not have him arrive thirsty at the altar. And taking a rough path the little party walked through the morning, hot even under the trees, laughing at Kebren, asking how it was that he had overslept himself, the slave that carried the cock being told in mockery to hand the bird over to him ; but Kebren got the best of them in his telling of their sleepful gestures of body whilst the cock crowed. Nor could the yelping of the dog I beat for barking awaken ye ! And they continued to mock each other till they stepped out of the forest to cross a rocky reach of desert land within view of vague ruins on the crest of a distant hillside. Ruins of a

temple in which Chronos was worshipped before the Hellenes came to Greece, said Mnasalcas. At the word Chronos, Kebren became attentive and would have put many questions if Leto had not intervened, saying : Thou'lt do well, Mnasalcas, to forget Chronos, about whom we know nothing, and tell our guests of the ruined altar on which we shall sacrifice the cock. A ruined altar ! cried Biote. Ruined, replied Mnasalcas, not for lack of our worship but for that its priest was caught with his hand in the money-box and killed by the villagers, which was a pity, for he was a great priest, famous for his reading of entrails and his knowledge of the motions of the divining-rod. Thou hast not told us yet, said Kebren, who laid the temple in ruins. Not the villagers, Mnasalcas answered, but the priest's ghost, which ever since hath been a great affliction to the neighbourhood, frustrating all attempts to re-establish the oracle ; for being a ghost he cannot serve, yet he will not let anybody else serve, and the shrine is now in charge of a wise woman. She hath more news of the priest's ghost than Mnasaleas, said Leto, for she is there from early morning. Ghosts walk by night rather than by day, replied Kebren, and if she sleeps in the village she knows no more about the ghost than we do. Ask her, said Leto ; part of the portico hath fallen since I last saw it, so ask her how it came to fall. By Zeus, I will ask her that ! said Kebren.

The ghost of the dead priest haunts the temple, the pythoness answered, and she spoke of a certain conjunction of stars that gave more than mortal strength to ghosts, allowing them to lay pillars flat. But should the portico fall upon him when he disturbs its pillars—? Have I not told thee, she cried, that the night-watcher is a ghost which cannot be hurt by the fall of a stone ? Kebren said something about a villager in search of stones to build a garth, and she answered : How can that be, since the temple is forbidden to all after sunset ? And who withholds the passer-by from it ? Why, the ghost himself, with his long arm. The last villager who

entered the temple after sunset was taken by the neck and thrown into the brook, or maybe he jumped into it to escape from the ghost, which cannot cross water. Now I have told you all I know of the temple and its ghost, and from the stir in that basket I guess it to contain a cock. Ready for sacrifice in honour of Æsculapius, said Mnasalcas, the finest cock that ever crowed in Aulis—Kebren will vouch for his crowing this morning ! I have often heard, the pythoness replied, that a bird crows loudest on the day he is to be sacrificed, from pride mayhap, or from some other reason ; we know very little of what passes in a cock's head. We would repair the temple, she continued, as they walked towards the shrine ; but were our mason to put up a stone the ghost would pull it down in the night. I will unpack the basket. Do so, said Biote, since thou art to sacrifice the bird ; but lift not the lid wholly till thou hast the tether in thy hand, for were he to find himself free he would fly home. To his hens, said the pythoness, and what an outcry there would be in the yard when they espied him in the sky returning to them, and what eagerness amongst them to lie under his white plumage !

She took some crumbs from her pocket and threw them to the cock. So slim and shapely, she said, finished everywhere as by a sculptor's hand, different indeed from the black, thick-set cocks brought hither in dozens for sacrifice, black being more pleasing to the God than any other colour, so it is said, falsely or truly, I know not which. Different indeed is this tall, shapely bird in his snow-white plumage, his yellow legs, his scarlet comb and wattles. Come, my beauty, show thy long, lovely hackles and raise thine arched tail feathers proudly before nodding thy head in acknowledgment of the great fate that is about to befall thee. Sacrificed he is to be to Æsculapius, she continued, wherefore somebody hath risen from a sick-bed. I have, said Biote. Then thou must lead him to the altar. Scatter crumbs, lest he mistrust thee ; these birds are very artful. He must nod his head before it is struck off ; I will give him more crumbs, and whilst he

swallows do thou jerk the tether, a trick that seldom fails. But still the cock strutted, head erect, and Biote missing the right moment the pythoness reproved her, adding : A little water is a great help ; and returning from the brook she filled the bird's ears, adjuring him to put his trust in Æsculapius. Be a good cock ; be a good cock ; nod thy head. Now jerk ! she cried to Biote, and the crumbs, or mayhap the itching of the water in his ears, compelled the cock to bend his head within reach of his claw. A deft blow, and the bird was headless. He can still walk a little, said the pythoness, and picking him up by the legs, she continued : A troublesome bird, but the beautifullest I have seen this many a day. If it should fall out that the lady's health should need the sacrifice of another cock, I hope she will come hither, this altar being well considered by Æsculapius. She held out her hand, and having received her fee instructed her customers regarding the ritual. A thigh-bone is burnt upon the altar—— Only a thigh-bone ? Leto interjected. And after feeling the breast of the bird the pythoness said : You had better leave him with me for my dinner. Why not for our dinner ? Leto asked. As you will, the pythoness answered, and she gave Leto a cloth in which to wrap the bleeding bird.

I think we might have given her the cock for her dinner, Biote said. Why ? asked Leto, somewhat sharply. For I care but little to eat a bird that hath fed from my hands, Biote replied. Our slaves will have no such misgivings when they snuff him at dinner-time, said Muasaleas. Whether he be eaten by us or by our slaves, he continued, makes little difference to the cock that is now with Æsculapius—to whom no prayers were offered, the wise woman having committed none to memory. Her formula was the knife, said Kebren. Leto and Biote, as well as Mnasalcas, were certain that a prayer had been omitted, and Kebren, walking a little apart from the others, retired into remembrances of Biote's visit to him in the middle of the night. He had taken her hand and spoken kind, fraternal words, mayhap not the words she

wished to hear ; if that were so, she would return to him in the coming night, and perforce he would have to remind her that he was to receive at the end of the month a sum of money for his readings of Homer, and a passage to Cnidus or some other city. In every man's life there are certain things he cannot do, and he felt that he could not take Biote in his arms, however great the temptation. But it was idle to consider what could never happen ; far better that he should give his mind to thinking out words that would not wound her and might inspire her to a long friendship, for more than anything else he wished to remain friends with Otanes, and friends with Otanes he could not be if Biote were hostile to him. The only chance of maintaining that friendship was . . . The plan he was about to formulate passed out of his mind, and all the evening, whilst listening to flute-playing and the telling of stories, his thoughts were on Biote, and try as he would, he could not convince himself that her fear of witches was very real. It often happens, he said to himself, that those who are brave in the day are timorous by night, and it may have been so with her ; even so, how was it that she should have crept over to my bedside and not gone to Mnasalcas and Leto, in whose charge her father placed her ? It was Biote's voice that interrupted his perplexities, and her manner was so gay and artless and pleasing that he could not believe her to be engaged in any deep deception ; all the same he would be glad when the coming night was over. The danger was in the first hours, and lying awake he listened to the silence and the sounds that interrupted the silence : the chirp of a sleepy bird in the branches overhead, the rustle of a hedgehog among dead leaves, the melancholy wail of a hawk far away and the bark of a fox coming nearer. The noises of the night are many, he said to himself, but there are intervals of perfect silence. He waited, and at last a low, living sound came to his ears, and knowing it to be the sweet breathing of a tired girl, he took courage, saying : The long walk through the chestnut-trees hath saved me from a scene that

might have ended in a quarrel and obliged me to leave Aulis ; and his mind now at ease, he folded his arms, and sleep took him and held him close till the day was young.

When his eyes opened he was alone in the grove, and whilst clipping the faint brown beard that adorned his calm, handsome face he remembered that he could discover the truth about Biote in conversation, however careful she might be to disguise herself from him. If a dread begotten of a dream or a half-dream had compelled her to come to his bedside to seek protection from the witches, she would babble it all out, saying she was sorry for having waked him, and laugh at her own fear, but if her fear was make-believe, an excuse to join him in his bed, she would not speak of it at all ; and to give her the needed opportunity for an avowal, he invited her to come with him for a long walk in the woods. There is guile in all men, but so little was there in Kebren that he resisted the temptation to introduce the subject of witches, and as she did not speak of them he began, on their way home, to lean towards an acquittal of her love intention. But the next day, when Biote surprised him talking with Leto, and Leto retired quickly, leaving them alone together, he asked himself if his manner towards Biote had been too familiar, and resolved to check it, adopting a formal and distant manner that attracted the attention not only of Leto but of Mnasalcas, and annoyed with himself, he regretted the earthquake that had riven Euboea from the mainland during the reign of Chronos or before it ; had this great upheaval not happened he could have walked back to Athens. But Euboea was an island and would remain one. He thought no more of swimming across the strait, and when Biote asked him of what he was thinking he awoke as if from a dream. Leto wondered how Biote had come to care for a man who was always lost in himself, who never even raised his eyes to look at her during a meal, and she decided that Kebren would make a very poor husband for any girl. But Biote must be allowed to choose, and she kept her doubts to herself, till at last they forced

words to her tongue and she asked Biote if Kebren was the same broody man in Aulis as he was in Eubœa. He is a little dull, I admit, Biote answered, but he'll wake up presently. I assure thee, Leto, father th nks that nobody can talk like Kebren ; he listens to him alm ist with reverence. I suppose Kebren doesn't think us worth talking to, said Leto. I beg thee to believe me, Leto, whei I say that his visit to Eubœa is most agreeable to him. He said so to me yesterday, and was sorry we were leaving.

Two days later Kebren was d wn by the Lelantus wondering if his career as a rhapsodist h d been filched from him, and so deep was he in despair that he did not hear the oars in the rowlocks from afar, and whei they broke upon his ear he awoke, saying : Photius's boat ! I am safe !

CHAPTER VI

BUT they were barely in midstream when he began to foresee how entangled his life would be in Aulis between Otanes and Biote, questioned by Otanes in front of Biote as to his stay in Eubœa. He would answer that the days had passed pleasantly, and turn the talk on to Mnasalcas, his sheep and his shepherdesses (Otanes liked a racy story). But his task would be harder when he was alone with Biote. She would soon perceive that he was choosing his words, and believing she was being thwarted would use her influence with her father against him, and he might be turned out of the house without enough money for his passage to Cnidus. But Otanes would hardly consent to such an injustice, and before Photius had rowed his boat alongside of the wharf Kebren remembered a group of actors talking together in the theatre at Athens. An actor asked : Can one amongst ye say the injury that no woman may forgive ? One man said a blow, another an insult, another a money debt, another an infidelity, and the actor answered : To offer herself to a man who refuses her

rankles deeper than all these, and not unnaturally, for the refusal is an insult to her womanhood. If Biote should suspect that he preferred his career as a rhapsodist to her, he would be accursed in her eyes.

So thought the young man, certain that he had got at the truth of the story at last, it never occurring to him that Biote had guessed the cause of his silence and his brooding in Eubœa, and that it seemed to her natural he should hesitate between her and his career as a rhapsodist. She did not put it to herself in this way but she felt he might ask for a year or two in which to give lectures, saying that when they were over he would return to her. And she listened to his readings with this thought always in her mind, till one afternoon, whilst walking on the seashore, she said she had found a poplar among some high rocks down the coast which reminded her of one mentioned in the Iliad. The poplar by the mere, he answered, like Simœisius before Ajax struck him in the breast by the right nipple as he was coming on among the foremost fighters. And whilst watching the tide breaking on the rocks Kebren's words tripped up Biote's; there was rivalry as to which should remind the other that as is the race of leaves, even such is the race of men; and the emotion of the moment being more than they could bear, a silence fell between them and they watched the tide racing into waves, each wave seeming to them to represent a generation. The wave rises and then sinks back into the sea, Kebren said, and we are not even waves, but bubbles on the waves. But the bubble delights in its life on the wave and in the life of its brother bubble, Biote replied, and they walked by the curving shore through rocks and across beaches of white sand till they came to three poplars showing against a grey sky. Presaging rain, Kebren said, and he watched the poplars swaying sorrowful. I have never seen poplars so thin and tall, Biote, and now that the sky is grey and a breeze is about they sway like three sisters complaining of their fate. The gesture of the middle poplar

leaves no doubt of their sadness, sadness rather than grief and they lament . . . For what do they lament, Kebren ? I cannot tell thee, Biote. Perhaps, said Biote, because having grown as thin and tall as they are there is nothing more for them to do. Her answer pleased him, and guessing that he was pleased with her she continued to talk about trees, saying that all were sad except flowering trees : And flowering trees are happy only whilst in flower.

How sweetly the birds are singing, Kebren, come over from Africa, resting here before they start on their journey northward. Shall we go into the wood to listen to their prattle, more explicit than the poplars ? He did not answer, and they walked to the end of a piece of embaying land, to stand admiring the great blue wave that came up the strait, breaking almost at their feet in foam. Will she speak or I before the next wave ? he asked himself, and whilst another down the strait gathered strength she said : Kebren, is it not strange that we should wander by this shore talking of Homer, forgetful of ourselves ? Once on a time it seemed as if we had met for a purpose, and now there is neither purpose nor aim in life, none in mine at least. Biote, I shall return in a year, and on this selfsame shore— In a year men's hearts change, Kebren ; four times every year the world changes, and the human heart is part of the world. Which means, Biote, that when I return I shall find that another hath taken my place in thine affection ? We change for better or for worse, she answered ; if thou returnest it will be to a new Biote, and if I give my hand to thee then I shall give it to a stranger. Hast thou so little faith in thyself ? he asked. In Aulis— Even in Aulis there is change, Kebren, and sitting before my tapestry I shall see thee in my thoughts crowned with laurel in the midst of insinuating women whom the laurel entices. Thinkest that I can bear with this for a year ? And why should I bear with it ? Better that we should stand free of each other, he answered. O man of infirm purpose, still dreaming between

two adventures, go to thy work, which is thyself, and take thy chance of me when the work is done. In Cnidus and elsewhere, Biote, if I win a laurel wreath I shall dread the suitors about thy loom—— Afraid that I shall not have the courage to unravel the tapestry ? Yes, Biote ; I am afraid to lose thee. And afraid to retain me, she replied, and they returned towards Aulis with the mournful gait of those who feel their lives to be broken.

The little town of wharves and warehouses came into view, and they turned down the laneway, Biote a little more hopeful than Kebren. It would break her heart to lose him, but she knew that she would not lose him ; he would give way in the end. How he would give way she did not know, but she knew that he would give way. And it was in the midst of their trouble that Otanes told them he had thought to find them on the wharf. He spoke to them of a ship about to sail for Ionia laden with images of the Gods, some made of gold and marble and others of ivory and gold. The captain was averse from taking on board certain philosophers, fearing their conversation would be displeasing to the Gods, but I said to him: Thou'rt wrong to prevent philosophers going aboard thy ship, in whose company the Gods themselves delight, and this at a time when thou art trying to turn the Gods to the most advantage. And Otanes continued for some time longer, telling how he had made it plain to the captain that he himself was guilty of an impiety in carrying the statues from port to port, till the silence of the twain roused him out of the pleasure he took in hearing his own words. He stopped, and looking from one to the other he said : As neither hath anything to say for or against my discourse with the captain, it will be well for us to take refuge in Homer ; and to awaken Kebren's interest in the poet he added as they crossed the courtyard : The thundering tread of swift-footed horses strikes on my ear ! Why that line more than another ? Kebren asked himself, and full of misgivings he began to read in a languid, monotonous voice that satisfied Biote he was suffering on her

account. All the same, when the reading was over she could not keep back the words : If Kebren brings the same animated understanding to his readings abroad as he does here, his brow will not be able to bear the weight of the laurel leaves the Cnidiots will pile upon it. Otanes answered her that the book Kebren had just finished reading was an exact account of how each hero was slain at Troy : Pages of personal history that—— Even Homer is dull sometimes, father. Girl, thou babblest like a child, even as thou givest, and thy conduct in leaving thy seat before our guest hath finished reading is distasteful to me. To me too, father, she replied, returning to her seat. Then I understand thee not at all, Biote ; I did not suspect a sneer in thy praise of Kebren's reading.

In the hope of retrieving himself somewhat in her eyes Kebren asked if he might read part of the next book. Otanes was willing to prolong the reading, and as Biote did not shrug her shoulders disdainfully he began again. But she heard very little of what he read, and to keep her secret from her father she sat the next evening like one afraid to lose a syllable of the hexameters, asking that a passage should be read over again, vexed when Otanes inquired why she desired a second reading of it. On another occasion she left the courtyard abruptly, saying : I am weary of the Iliad ! and the two men sat talking of the moods to which women are liable, Kebren murmuring that these interruptions made the reading so difficult that he dreaded the approach of evening. Answering him, Otanes said it was true that the Iliad seemed to please her no longer, and his advice was that Kebren should refrain from reading the last books. She is very various, said Kebren. Like her mother, Otanes replied. But next day another Biote, more attentive, begged that Kebren should read Priam's visit to Achilles, and she sat, taking pleasure in every harmonious accent of the hexameters, saying when the reading was over : A ship looses to-morrow for Troy ; why should we not be passengers in her, father ? Leaving my business to look after itself, Biote ? And Kebren ? Kebren will not miss

us, she replied, without glancing in his direction ; he will spend the last few days reading the manuscripts in search of his goddess. For us to find him gone, daughter, when we return from Troy, or haply to return in time to see him step on board a ship bound for Cnidus. Art sure then that he is leaving us ? Sure indeed, she answered ; he goes at my bidding. Thy words, Biote, leave me thinking that thy heart hath turned against him ; I would hear his story, but since thou hast ordered his departure for good reasons or bad, it is for thee to speak first. Kebren asks for the right to return hither after wandering for a year, and doubtless he will gain applause for his reading. Women follow the laurel— Jealousy, Biote ! Otanes interjected reprovingly. I love thy daughter, Otanes, but I love my life. And conceive it to be a wanderer's, Otanes replied. But in youth we know not in what direction our true instincts lead us. Remain with us for a year, Kebren, and if a year in Aulis should prove thee another Odysseus thou wilt re-engage in thy long pursuit of Helen. And looking from his daughter's face to his future son-in-law's, Otanes waited for one of them to speak. Thou art a kind and wise and foreseeing father, Biote cried at last, and if Kebren be willing so am I. A betrothal of a year will do no harm to either, she continued, and mayhap will bring forth much knowledge of each other that will help us through future years when the bliss is over. Thou lookest ahead, Biote, said Kebren. Thinkest that I shall return to Helen ? Thou wert willing to leave me for her, Kebren— A truce to your bickerings ! cried Otanes. To the woods, where nightingales are singing in the branches ! Out under the moon, the friend and companion of the betrothed ! And with a sense of Otanes's wisdom in their hearts they left him.

To some gift for prediction I may lay claim ! And the thoughts of Otanes flitting to the *Red Flamingo*, he remembered that his father on his deathbed had warned him not to put his trust in ships. His friends, too, had warned him that the *Red Flamingo* would sink in the first storm, but he had not

listened to father or to friends and had sent her into dry-dock to be repaired, and for years afterwards she had voyaged successfully in the Euxine. Biote had heard the story of the *Red Flamingo* and judged him by it ; two cannot live together for many years without coming to know each other ; and he had often answered her : I have never regretted any act that came from within. Wherefore not very different was his lot from Kebren's. No God had spoken in his ear, it is true ; all the same, fortune had come to him year after year, the safe unloading of one rich cargo making good the loss of another by shipwreck, and his reverses of fortune were so trivial that he had never been able to rid himself of the belief that he was not as other men are, purblind, seeing but dimly. He cast into the other scale the death of his wife, a great misfortune truly, but she had left him Biote, who would marry and give him grandchildren. If she did not marry all the wealth he had accumulated would fall into other hands ; he'd be forgotten in Aulis. The need of grandchildren had often stopped him on the wharf ; he would stand admiring the ships and the ships' crews, and on a sudden turn away sadly with the phrase between his teeth : Who will take charge of all this trade when I am gone ? And often on returning from the wharf he would walk about his house, filled with Theano's tapestries and sculpture in marble and ivory brought from over seas. His house had contributed to his sadness. Who will live in it in the days to come if Biote does not marry ? he had said to himself. A beautiful girl and a charming girl, yet her eyes do not turn to any man ; true, there are few in Aulis that are worthy of her. But the cause of his despondency was now over ; Biote would marry, and her wedding would be a memorable event in Aulis. And his thoughts passing out of the present into the distant past, when Aulis was no more than a little fishing village, raised by his industry and foresight to a great merchant port, he sat in a sort of happy stupor, awaking at last to ask himself of what he had been thinking all this long while for it was a

long while since he had bidden his daughter and his future son-in-law away to the woods.

To send them away to Eubœa was part of my wisdom, and it was part of Biote's wisdom to refuse to allow her betrothed a year in which to wander all over Greece preaching his doctrine of Helen. Had I been Biote I should have answered him as she did, yet it is easy to understand the pain that it costs him to relinquish his dream of creating an undying memory of himself by his revival of the worship of Helen. It may be that he is right, and that Helen was once worshipped as a Goddess. It is strange that I should have collected all my manuscripts without knowing wherefore, and that they should suddenly come to be of great use to my son-in-law. He may find something in them that will prove he hath sight beyond the present moment, like myself. But the dethronement of Athene was a young man's dream, a sterile dream without fruition in this world. My wit was needed, and I was happily inspired when I proposed a betrothal so long that they themselves will weary of the constraint and come to me asking if the term cannot be shortened. The quiet evening, a kiss exchanged under the boughs . . . let him kiss her, O God that didst bring him to Aulis, let him kiss her, and thy will shall be done! He raised up his hands to pray, but dropped them on hearing footsteps. They have returned from the woods; and he waited for the lovers to ask him of what he had been thinking all this while. But so absorbed were they that they did not perceive him in the dusk, and he had to call to them, saying: Tell me of the nightingales and of their songs. The birds jargon, no doubt, for their pleasure, Kebren answered, and we jargoned for ours, having no ears for the birds, or eyes for the light of the evening star. It kindled to-night, said Biote, unheeded by us; we spoke not of it but a good deal of the few manuscripts that remain in the library for Kebren to read. The wily Otanes replied that although the *Iliad* was read there was the *Odyssey* to fall back upon, and he mentioned six months as a term for the

reading of it, knowing well that before long the emptiness of their lives in Aulis would bring them to him again asking for another advancement of the wedding. Nor was he wrong ; before the end of the month they were complaining that storms in the Ægean were sudden in autumn.

I would, he said, make your wedding a memorable event in Aulis ; Aulis hath done much for me. And thou hast done much for Aulis, Kebren replied, and he pressed Otanes to agree that the wedding should not be postponed. It would be my pleasure to see you married to-morrow, but the ship—my present to you, Otanes added, looking from one to the other—is in dry-dock undergoing repairs, and I would have your departure for Troy coincide with the wedding festivities. Once a ship goes into dry-dock, he continued, there's no saying for certain when she will come out of it. And henceforth much of his time was given to supplying small comforts to the wharfingers and the needy populace of the mean streets of Aulis. There shall be no hungry ones at thy wedding, he said to Biote. The sea beyond the Tauric Chersonese shall be fished for tunny—food for the multitude—and a ship shall bring oysters from Abydos for our distinguished guests. Nor shall any complain that they were thirsty ; wine shall come from all the islands. He who hath drunk well and eaten well shall be amused, tragedians in carts declaiming verses, acrobats throwing somersaults. Have ye anything to add to the festival that my imagination sets forth ? he asked. Kebren was well satisfied with Otanes's plans, and spoke of a great procession, charging himself with a return by torchlight. The Gods themselves could hardly save the woods from catching fire, Otanes answered. He told of an accident that had befallen some years before, and chagrined Kebren arranged that the procession should proceed instead up the valley. It was by the bridge over the river Asopos that the torches were lighted, and in a great flare the processionists returned to Aulis, to assemble later round Otanes's house rejoicing. The time-honoured joke of keeping the lovers out of their bed

faded with the moon, and the last stragglers rolled home telling that the rejoicings would begin again when the ship in dry-dock, Otanes's wedding present to his son-in-law, was ready to put to sea.

The story that Kebren had come to Aulis on an errand and had been persuaded from it by Biote, was known to everybody, and next day the croakers were busy with the doleful morality that a woman can do nothing worse than to turn a man from his errand. However a man may love a woman, it was averred, he will hate her if she injures him. And if a man injures a woman, will she hate him ? somebody asked, and the answer was : When she finds out that she hath been injured her love will turn to hate, like a man's. Nor were these the only croakers ; there were others who foretold that the wedding was the end of Otanes's fortunate days. The wedding is but a fleabite, said one ; the cost of the ship and her crew and captain will leave him with empty pockets, though he be the richest man in the world. And when the news came to Otanes's ears that he was looked upon as one likely to ruin himself in useless extravagances, he began to reflect on the wisdom of his present to his daughter and son-in-law. It was true that the ship and the manning of her would cost him a great deal, but knowing more about his riches than his neighbours he was not abashed by the money he was spending, but much by the thought that his life would be lonely indeed without Kebren and Biote ; and on his way to the wharf to inspect the ship he resolved not to commit himself to promises that he might not be able to fulfil.

How long will it be before the ship is ready for sea ? he asked, and the shipwright answered that in her last voyage she had suffered a good deal of strain in her timbers and needed caulking. The figure-head, too, he added, is much battered, and she will need a new name. The name still upon her is *Medusa*, not a very suitable one for a bridal ship. Had I remembered the name of the galley I would not have chosen her, Otanes answered. The plank on which the name is

painted, sir, shall be taken out lest evil befall, and the new name painted upon it, which is . . . ? And Otanes giving no answer, the shipwright mentioned *Leda* as a suitable name—— Suitable, he added, if the story going round is a true one, that thy son-in-law and daughter would have Helen back again among the Goddesses. And if there is nothing to be said against *Leda* as a name, sir, we can settle for the figure-head ; there is a young man in Aulis to whom I'd give the carving of it. And the shipwright produced a drawing showing the dainty loins of *Leda* clasped by a swan's wings. A fine composition, said Otanes, her head thrown back and the amorous reach of the swan' neck, his beak upon her lips. A fine bit of work it is, the shipwright repeated, the finest we have seen in the shipyard this many a day ; the artist will be pleased to hear of thy commendation, sir. But when, asked Otanes, will the *Leda* be ready to put to sea ? She'll be ready, sir, before we can enlist a trustworthy crew ; and more difficult even than the crew it will be to find a captain with knowledge of the currents and the rocks. We have not a ship in port, sir. Always some new trouble ! Otanes muttered, and they turned into the counting-house to refer to the books and to speculate on the date of the return of the different ships to Aulis to discharge or to take in cargo. From one or more of these ships, said Otanes, we can pick a crew, filling up the vacancies with slaves from Scythia. Scythian slaves are rarer to-day than they used to be, replied the shipwright. These nomads pitch their tents away from the coasts, and so avoid kidnapping. All the same, the armed crew of a ship in the offing might still manage to capture a wandering tribe on the march and make sale of all and sundry in Athens. Timotheus's grandfather came from Scythia, Otanes answered ; and on his way home he looked forward to hearing Timotheus tell how his grandfather had been carried off into slavery. My grandfather was owned by his parents, sir—— Who gave him mare's milk to drink, Otanes interjected ; from his new master he got wine. And

they talked pleasantly of the advantage slavery is to barbarians till Otanes fell asleep.

A chillness creeping down his right side awoke him, and he knew it to be a stroke, severer than the one of two years ago which had not deprived him of speech, merely thickening his utterances for a few days. He tried to speak, but no sound came from his mouth, and the room being in darkness he remembered the lamp. Timotheus always lighted it every night, and he concluded it must have spluttered out whilst he slept. From the darkness of the window curtains he inferred that Timotheus would not be about for several hours. He is the earliest riser, but he'll pass my door with muffled footsteps lest he should awaken me. I may be here till mid-day, and should the house take fire I shall burn in my bed. The thought that he might burn in helpless silence whilst the rest were hastening away from the flames frightened him. He knew that what he feared would not happen ; all the same, he began to lose control over his mind, and in his imagination Biote and Kebren conspired to take his life. He foresaw them choosing the pillows for their purpose whilst he watched, unable to utter a cry, and the absurd figments continued to throng in his distraught brain he knew not for how many hours. At last the dawn began in the window, and it was not long after that footsteps went by. Timotheus will return, he said, and to escape from his thoughts he began to recite verses from Homer, repeating the stirring chariot race again and again. When he had exhausted his memories of Homer he sought refuge in memories of his youth, and when these failed him he asked himself why nobody came to his door, and if it were decreed in Olympus that he should die without looking on his daughter's face again. The Gods may have devised this death to counterbalance the favours they have bestowed on me. But why do Biote and Kebren remain away ? At last a knock came. He thinks I am asleep and will come back in half-an-hour. But in half-an-hour I may be dead. My right arm and leg are as stone. Another knock

came and then a second and a third, but like the others they were not answered, and he heard Kebren say : He hath overslept himself. Or another stroke hath befallen him ! Biote muttered, as she opened the door.

Do not tax thy strength trying to speak, father. I'll put questions and thou'l answer them with thine eyes. I shall understand. As before, a cold shiver awakened thee in the night ? His face brightened a little, and she asked : In the arm ? Again his eyes spoke, and taking his right arm she said : Here ? He cannot tell me, Kebren, but Loxias will know. Timotheus shall go at once to fetch him. I will go, said Kebren. Take Timotheus with thee ; he knows the house. And whilst Biote waited Otanes lay, his head hunched up among pillows, his left hand moving faintly on the coverlet. Here is Loxias, she said at last, warned by the sound of footsteps. . . . The first stroke two years ago was so slight that the faint thickening in his speech was barely noticeable. So spoke Loxias, and turning up his sleeves he began to rub Otanes, and at the end of an hour he said : I have met with some that got back their speech in a few weeks. And day after day the watchers waited for Otanes's first words ; when one came to relieve the other's watch the question was always : Hath he spoken ? You must have patience, Loxias said. He will begin to speak in about three weeks. He understands, Biote replied ; his face brightens. To prove that he understood, Otanes tried to speak, but the sounds he uttered were unintelligible, and during the next few days very little progress was made. He still lay looking from Kebren to Biote, and to watch him striving after words was so painful that Biote could not bear it. Loxias said that we must have patience, father, and thou must have patience, too. On thy return from Eubœa, she continued, turning to Kebren, he'll be as easy in speech as thou and I. And when some weeks later a message came from the wharves telling of Kebren's return, she walked half-way to meet him.

We lifted him from his bed yesterday and he seemed to

enjoy being in the open air watching the carp in the fountain's basin. And his speech ? Kebren asked. His utterance is still thick, but we understand him and he understands us. Thy news is so good, Biote, that I would go to him at once, for I am the bearer, too, of good news. Mnasalcas will discharge his debt to Otanes by surrendering half the profits of his sheep-farm. Father will not like to hear that his old friend hath been outwitted. How could a townsman like me, Biote, outwit Mnasalcas ? And this seeming to Biote an unanswerable answer, she took Kebren to the sick-room, announcing him from the threshold with the words : Kebren hath returned from Eubœa, father, sure that thou'l be satisfied with the arrangement made with Mnasalcas for a division of the profits. It seems that I was very near to death, Kebren. Loxias saved thy life, Otanes, and he thinks the recovery will endure. I was dying easily, without pain, Otanes continued, and— And regret being picked out of the grave ? I cannot tell, Kebren, whether I am glad or sorry. But of this I am sure : that on the approach of death we apprehend with a clearer understanding than before what life is and what death is. As we approach the gulf a great revelation is vouchsafed to us, by death or by something beyond death or over and above death, I cannot tell which, but of a certainty there is revelation. We see with different eyes, we understand with a different mind. We forget the past ; it all seems futile and useless. We approach the gulf without any sense of fear. We welcome death for the sake of the knowledge that death brings to us. And what is the knowledge thou hast gathered from the edge of the gulf ? Kebren asked. That the Gods, or the Fate over and above the Gods, implanted in man the fear of death so that he might become man, else he would have remained only something more than a mere animal. The fear of death is in us from the very beginning. Children have it ; as soon as they begin to think they ask : Why am I here ? for what purpose ? Death is not important, a mere nothing, a corpse. Very different indeed is the fear of death, for that

fear hath been man's inspiration from the beginning. The Egyptians built pyramids and embalmed and rolled the bodies of their dead in cerecloths and placed them in impregnable tombs, with food and arms and everything they might need when the day of resurrection broke. But the Greeks, a lighter and wittier race than the Egyptians, build lovely temples, and fill them with marble representations of the Gods, hoping thereby to achieve an immortality, if not for the individual, for the race at least. Religions arise, we know not whence nor how ; they are brief like the mayflies among the reeds ; they rise from the depths of the waters. Priests hold out their hands and say : We will interpret the mystery of life ; we will lead you, and there shall be no death ; and steeped in fables men forget they must die. All our lives we are weaving fables or drawing veils around us. The most beautiful passages in our poets are evocations to death, for death, or perhaps I should say the fear of death, is everything to man. He will never weary of trying to probe the mystery, and when tired of the God she hath created, and the priests of the Gods and all their promises, he will become humble again and seek to prolong his identity beyond the grave in the bodies and the minds of another generation. So thou seest, Kebren, that there was sense in my words when I said that the Gods or the Fate over and above the Gods implanted in man the fear of death, for without it we should be as animals, living in quiet ignorance and dying in the same. But the animals die, too, Otanes. They die without fear of death, Kebren. Death takes the birds unawares ; they fly joyously till the last urge of life leaves them. Then a bird will flutter to the earth, dead when he touches it. It is the fear of death that separates us from the animals, whether for good or for evil I know not ; but lying on my bed speechless, deprived of will, liberated from the sensual chain, I saw farther into things and the meaning beyond things, their sadness and their joy, than I had ever done before.

CHAPTER VII

A FAVOURITE with the Gods surely ! the townsfolk said, as they watched Otanes go by on his way to his counting-house, his hand laid in affection rather than for support on his son-in-law's shoulder ; and when Biote came hastening after the twain the wives of the wharfingers began to reckon, saying : Her carrying days are well-nigh over. One gave her a fortnight, another a week, and this last forecast was nearly fulfilled.

Three days later, on the birth night, Otanes sat reading, his thoughts distracted from the manuscript by his anxiety. He rose to his feet, but did not withdraw to another room, for he was afraid to miss the first cry of the new generation. At last the cry came. The child is born, he said ; a daughter or a son, which ? He hoped for a boy, but he pledged himself to be satisfied with the child the Gods had sent him. A grandson hath been born to thee, Aglaia said, and he went at her bidding to Kebren with the good news. Hast seen the boy ? Kebren asked. No, Aglaia held the door against me, saying that Biote must not be disturbed in her first sleep after the pains, and the child must sleep too. And father and grandfather turned into their beds with the name Rhesos in their thoughts.

The name had been of Biote's choosing, and when Aglaia handed her the baby, saying : Here is thy Rhesos, she lay like one possessed, certain that the Gods had given her a child different from all others, and that the meaning of her life lay within her arms. A thick shock of reddish hair covered the little round head. Very little darker than thine own, said Aglaia ; it will change colour. Becoming darker or fairer ? Biote asked. There's no knowing, Aglaia answered ; and his eyes will change too. But for years he will keep my eyes, Aglaia ! and Biote lay sullen, resentful, angry, her straying thoughts recalling a cow that had hidden her calf in

a patch of long grass. The cow grazed at the other end of the field, seemingly forgetful of her calf, but should anybody approach the patch of grass, with tail up and horns down she prepared to charge. Why should she remember that cow ? Was it because the cow was ve'y pretty ? And increasingly resentful, she dreamed of a th cket in the woods, too weak even to reprove Aglaia, whom she would have liked to order from the room. At last she s mmoned enough strength to say : Somebody knocks. . . . I knew thy knock, Kebren. Come, sit by my bed. Aglaia, eave us. And to distract her thoughts from Aglaia, out of f. our for the moment, Kebren related his anxiety in the cou ting-house. It was thy wish that I should know nothing o' thy labour, Biote ; Otanes brought the news to me. His talk flowed on, stopping and beginning again, without claiming her attention by questions, or his paternity by asking her to lift Rhesos up for him to discover traces of himself in his son. The word son had not once passed his lips, and it was not until his restraint began to seem unnatural that she said : Thou'l't see Rhesos next time, if he is awake ; and to keep her secret truly from Kebren she complained that he seemed to have no thought for Rhesos. A game of mutual deception they played, Kebren answering that a mother's love is a miracle, something beyond reason, a gift from the Gods—— Whereas a father learns to love his offspring ; a very different thing, she added, her humour being merciless. But of Otanes she was not jealous, mayhap for that he was of her own flesh and blood, and a few days later she held Rhesos up for his admiration and criticism.

A poet's head, Biote ! and in answer to her question for a visible sign of poetry, he said : The brow rises and rounds above the temples. A poet's head, if the flesh does not give the lie to the spirit, which it never does, not really. She dared to ask him in what art Rhesos's genius would show itself. Be satisfied with the knowledge that thy son's head is a poet's he answered. I am satisfied, father ! and unloosing her

pepos and laying Rhesos to her breast, she remembered that her father had brought Kebren from "The Golden Fell" to their house to read Homer. She had listened night after night to the Iliad whilst carrying, and it was pleasant to her to think that she was a sort of spiritual as well as a material mother to her child. Wherefore she was content to sit apart, hearing dimly her father and Kebren, his associate in his trade, talking the business whilst she suckled future greatness. Of their plans and projects she knew nothing and cared nothing ; to sit apart with Rhesos was enough for her content ; and her face darkened only when she was asked whether she foresaw a lyric or a dramatic poet in Rhesos. Which wouldest thou choose if thou wert bidden to choose ? Otanes asked. A good soothsayer hath no need to put questions, she answered ; enough for him to behold the child's brow to tell whether his gift be dramatic or lyrical. Rhesos is but a year old and we need not be alarmed at his silence. Not a cry nor a scream hath he uttered, said Kebren, and with the thought of a dumb child written on their faces they resorted to the shabby trick of a pinch, to be rewarded by a lusty scream ; and having discovered the use of the scream, Rhesos screamed whenever he needed to impose his will, which was often. But a poor speaker he was at two years, mangling ~~many a few words,~~ ^{Biote} in his parents were apprehensive, Otanes saying that Biote at eighteen months. Mayhap I did, she answered. But Rhen at eighteen months his words will come later. At present Rhesos is no early babbler ; in his love of noise, racing the chairs is energy displays itself always up to some little game of his own and down the room, too suddenly. And raising their eyes to look round, but not old child imitating his father reading a my saw the two-year-one page and down the next. Delight d manuscript, looking up Papa ! Grandpapa ! Bright eyes, said Biote his joke, he cried : head, poet or painter, sculptor or flute-playa darling little red —thy mother's child ! And it was durinI care not which debates that she began to speak of a brothe these parental or Rhesos.

We may get him a sister, Biote. There is always that danger, she replied. A boy and a girl ! Kebren murmured. Thrasilos will be a name for him, she continued. Rhesos and Thrasilos—we shall not think of anything more harmonious. For a year I shall be without thy waist, Biote ! Am I no more than a waist for thee, Kebren ? Thou wouldest not have me ignore it ? he asked. Life is a long while, she answered, and after Thrasilos is born I shall return to my waist till old age takes it from me for good and all. Thou'lt never be old, Biote, not in my eyes. We are all growing old, Kebren ; even Thrasilos, not yet conceived, is older than he was yesterday. The ante-natal Thrasilos ! Kebren replied, with a faint, sad smile that Biote resented, a resentment that quickly passed away in admiration of his handsome face ; and during the long months of waiting, waistless and bodeful, her thoughts often returned to the whiteness of the woollen fleece on which they had lain together, for there are moments that time cannot efface or remove. Another of these unfading moments was when she raised up Thrasilos to Otanes, confident that the child's head would foreshow a great future for him. Hast nothing to say, father ? she asked, following Otanes with the child in her arms, without getting any special prophecy from him. I can discover no greatness, he answered, admitting at last that Thrasilos's head was not a good one. He'll always be behind Rhesos, always a laggard, without instincts ; and in a voice full of condolence, Otanes added : He may improve. But thou hast given no time to the study of his head ! Biote cried, and her temper rising quickly she discarded her father's judgment as worthless, vowing that Thrasilos should prove the exception to the rule—if there was such a rule in nature ; and her joy was great when Thrasilos began to mutter words, enough to give the lie to his grandfather's cruel reading of his brow. A child that can speak at eighteen months and read at two (and she was determined that Thrasilos should read at two) is no laggard ! So did she often speak to herself, and during the next few years a great

part of her time was passed with Thrasilos ; much of it was taken from Rhesos to give to him, with such surprising result that Thrasilos could read fluently at six, whilst Rhesos could do no more than spell out the long words syllable by syllable. Still more widely were the brothers divided a few years later, Thrasilos at twelve coming to Biote to ask her to tell him why the Gods were unwilling that Odysseus should return home and had hidden him beyond human ken.

There are many stories in the *Odyssey*, my dear child (the *Odyssey* is itself a story), and thou must listen to the beginning of the story, how suitors from all sides came to Ithaca in the hope of getting Odysseus's wife for bride. Was he dead, then? Thrasilos asked. No, but he had been away so long that he was given out as dead, and all the suitors were eating up the flocks of sheep and the herds of cattle, the heritage of Telemachus, Odysseus's son, who was much grieved. Penelope (that is, the wife of Odysseus) was also grieved, and sought to escape from an answer, her say being always : As soon as I finish the tapestry I am weaving I will choose one of you, but not before ; and every night she ripped what she had done in the daytime. And there seeming to be no end to all this, and the suitors eating and drinking their fill every day, Telemachus prayed and Athene came to his help and told him to embark in a ship, and he went away in this ship in search of his father. Mother, said Rhesos, may I skip the story of Telemachus ? It will take a long time to tell ; I foresee it already in my mind—its length, I mean, and— Now, Rhesos, what excuse art thou devising to escape thy lesson in the *Odyssey* ? No excuse, mother, but I have promised Photius, the old waterman, to go fishing with him ; we shall have no fish for dinner if I go not. Thrasilos will tell me the story of Telemachus when I come back. Thou art idle, Rhesos, and a laggard, unwilling to give thy mind to anything for long and heedless of what I say, that without the story of Telemachus the story of Odysseus is without meaning. But go to thy fishing ; we shall be happier without thee, for the telling of

stories is no pleasant task if one listener be indifferent. In an hour I shall be back, mother, ready to hear a story. But I may not be ready to tell one ; away to thy fishing !

Why was Rhesos sent away ? Thrasilos asked, and there being an accent of reproach in his voice, Biote answered : He hath no care for stories. Maybe Rhesos is too clever for stories, mother. Thou hast come under the spell of Rhesos, Biote replied, and her thoughts turning to the child's instinct, she sought to find a cause for it. Of what art thou thinking ? Thrasilos asked, and after a little hesitation she answered : It was a terrible moment for Odysseus when Polyphemus passed his hands over the backs of the sheep as he let them out of the cavern in the morning. Rhesos would have liked to hear, mother, how Odysseus burnt out the single eye of the ogre, and he'd like to hear the story of the woman who turned her lovers into swine, all but Odysseus. Thou hast never told me how he managed to escape from her. He filled his ears with wax, darling--- No, mother, thou'rt telling me wrong ! It was to escape from the sirens that he filled his ears with wax. I was never told why he wished to escape from the sirens. Did they turn their lovers into pigs, like Circe, and keep them for seven years, rooting about the house ? Circe must have been glad to turn them back into men and get her house clean. Which story wouldest thou hear, Thrasilos ? The story of the making of the raft on Calypso's island ? I'd like to hear that again, but another time ; I'd sooner hear now why father left us to sail about islands filled with ogres and sirens and Circes. Polyphemus is dead, Thrasilos, and so is Galatea—she is the woman that the ogre was in love with. I'd like to hear about her, mother, but not to-day. Tell me why father left us.

Thou knowest, dear child, that we are traders ; our ships go up the Hellespont into the Euxine, and they cross the middle sea to Egypt, calling at all the ports, and it was in the hope of capturing our trade that some merchants of Salamis began to build faster ships than ours, with great sails to be hoisted

whenever the wind favoured them ; and they would have captured it if they had had a head man with as good a knowledge of the seas and the ports as Cleobis. Thou hast heard us say very often that our money depended upon Cleobis as much as upon the ships. Well, Cleobis's knowledge must have come to the ears of the merchants of Salamis, and for a long time they were offering him bigger and bigger sums of money to leave us. We heard of these things and laughed. It was thy grandfather who had raised Cleobis out of squalor and ignorance and put him in command of our fleet, and for this reason and for the ten years of good service he had given to us we believed him to be trustworthy. But if there be enough money every man is to be bought and sold, and about six months ago Cleobis left our service and assumed direction of the enemy's fleet, and then it was we began to feel that if we did not get a head man on whose honesty we could depend we should find ourselves in Aulis without a ship to our name. And that is why father left us ? Thou hast guessed well, Thrasilos. He went to look after the trade in the middle sea. In the Euxine we have a great captain who does very well and whom we can trust. But father hath no knowledge of the rocks and the currents and may run into a whirlpool, said Thrasilos. There are many in Aulis itself with full knowledge of the seas, she replied, many we can tally on our fingers, but none with a head for business like thy father. Father, then, will be able to outwit Cleobis ? Cleobis, fortunately for us, outwitted himself by falling overboard ; a shark came to our rescue—— And took him by the legs, mother ? Or was it by the belly ? We don't know which was the first bite it had from him, but the news of his death was brought hither by a ship on its way to take in cargo. And will father return as soon as he hears of the shark ? Not at once, Thrasilos ; he hath business at many ports in Sicily and Gaul and along Spain. Some time he may spend in Italy, and between us and Italy there are the islands, and after the islands, there's the Hellespont and the Euxine—— O, mother, I don't want to

hear the names ! But is it really true that father will be in danger of being eaten by the Cyclops or changed into the shape of a pig by Circe ? Thrasilos, forget sharks and Polyphemus, and fetch thy hat. A fair day invites us to Marathon, if our legs will bear us so far. Our legs will bear us to Marathon, mother, but will they carry us back ? It is indeed a long way, she answered we would do well to tell the mule-cart to come to fetch us.

I am glad we are going to Marathon, cried Rhesos, just returned from the Euripos with a basket of fish. I am glad we are going to Marathon, he repeated, for I have business with a shepherd. And what may thy business be, Rhesos ? Thou wouldst say it is naught, mother ; there's a satyr who comes down at night and milks the yoes. Is a satyr an ogre ? Thrasilos inquired. Satyrs carry women away sometimes into the woods, Rhesos answered, but they don't eat them. Being half-goats, they like milk, and to get it they steal about the sheepfolds at night, waiting till the shepherds are lying, their mouths wide open, snoring at the moon, before climbing into the fold to milk the yoes, which they do so well that the lambs go hungry. The last time I was at Marathon I asked Oaxus what they were going to do to make an end of the satyr's thefts. His mate answered : We must try to keep awake ; at which Oaxus laughed. We have been trying to keep awake every night for the last month, he said, but overcome by the heat of the fire we doze. Ye might set a trap, I said. He is too sly to fall into a trap, said Oaxus. He is more cunning than a wolf, and we have been thinking that to catch him we must employ all the wolf's cunning and something more. We might milk the yoes and leave the milk-pans in his path. A wolf if he came across them would lap a little and be after the lambs, but the satyr would drink deeply, and if the milk were mixed with wine he might drink till he couldn't stand on his cloven hooves. Our house at Aulis is full of wine, I said, and— So thou hast been stealing my wine to make satyrs drunk ! cried Biote. The shepherds said,

mother, that a dozen flagons would be enough to drowze a single satyr. And did the shepherds or the satyr drink the wine ? The satyr drank it, of course, Rhesos answered, and at midnight he was firmly in their hands. But being without cords to bind him, they said : We'll let him lie, going away at daybreak to fetch cords, and help—for satyrs are very strong, mother. And when Oaxus opened his eyes in the grey light he saw no satyr ? Biote asked. Yes, he did, mother ; he saw the satyr being helped away by his wife into the woods. So the end of it all was that the satyr and the shepherds drank a dozen flagons of my best wine between them ! A great deal more hath come of it, mother, for I've put the whole story into clay ; come and see it. And when Rhesos threw his arm round her shoulders and led her to the shed in which was his group, she remembered Otanes's words : He hath the brow of a poet !

CHAPTER VIII

EVERY morning after a brief prayer and an invocation of the blessed Gods Biote sat at a small table teaching her sons ancient Greek from the *Odyssey*, pointing out the differences between it and the Greek of Æschylus and Sophocles. Thrasilos was always willing to learn, but Rhesos had little thought for lessons, and guessing a possible truancy in his restlessness one morning she mentioned that his father had taken the part of the messenger in the play they were about to read. But, mother, to read a play is not the same thing as to see it ; and I've promised to meet a friend. The excuse seemed reasonable enough and she let him go without protest, but when he bustled back into the schoolroom a few minutes afterwards, interrupting the lesson, she was very wroth. Only a word with Thrasilos, mother ; and having whispered it Rhesos went away to keep his appointment, leaving her to continue the lesson as best she could.

An hour later at the sound of the gong the manuscripts were closed, and after the midday meal Biote and Thrasilos walked out together. Their usual walk was along the road to Marathon, and they had not accomplished half-a-league when they were joined by Rhesos. Mother quarrels with him, and the next time they meet she has forgotten all about it ! Thrasilos said to himself, and thinking of an escape into the woods he ran away without a tracting the notice of either mother or brother ; and when he returned with stories of the birds he had seen and the beasts, the only answer he got was : Yes, yes, Thrasilos, but Rhesos ; telling me that at Tanagra the clay model is sometimes bak^d in a fully heated kiln, and sometimes the kiln is only half heated. Thou'l do well to hear how the kiln must be left so cool before it is opened ; were it opened at once all the pretty little figures we admire (some of them thy toys, Thrasilos) would be broken. Thrasilos had come to dread the name Tanagra ; for him it meant being left out of the conversation. He ran back into the woods, and when he returned thinking that they must have finished tiresome talk, he met his mother walking alone in the middle of the road. Hath Rhesos gone away in a huff ? he asked. Biote did not reply, and in the hope of soothing her Thrasilos mentioned that Rhesos was expecting the head man from Tanagra. Hardly a reason for leaving me to walk home alone ! To save thee from walking back alone, mother, I left the woods ; and hurt by her silence he followed her timidly, asking himself if she was still angry with Rhesos for interrupting the lesson. Or did she hear what Rhesos whispered : We shall sleep in the woods to-night ? If she did we shall be forbidden to leave the house and told to go to our beds.

But their secret had not come to Biote's ears, and after the evening meal they were searched for in vain, and her anger was not less when they returned in the morning pleading that sleeping under boughs was a pleasant change. Why not come with us one night, mother ? said Rhesos, and we'll all sleep under boughs. The invitation pleased her, but her

constraint was such that she could think only of how to compel obedience, and very soon she was nursing a grudge against her father, who always sided with Rhesos, asking herself if she, too, did not sometimes side with Rhesos against herself ; and pausing in her work she remembered how her will had deserted her a month ago when Rhesos told her curtly that he was going to spend the night in a boat on the Euripos spearing fish. With or without my permission ? she asked. He nodded, and his nod had angered her more than any words could, so supercilious was it, and resolving to be revenged she had awaited her opportunity for hours together, till at last she surrendered herself to violence and locked him into his room. The key had barely turned in the lock when her courage failed her, and she would have liked to unlock the door if she could have done so without his hearing it ; but he heard the key turn and answered immediately : Mother, if the door be not opened at once I shall leave by the window, never to return At the words, never to return, it was as if she had been struck with a knife through the heart. She dared not speak ; she was nigh to swooning, with hardly strength enough to turn the key ; but she had turned it, and with her own blue eyes fixed upon her he said : Thou must learn, mother, to love me for what I am now—to forget that I am no more a little child.

Harsh words, yet I love his harshness better than any kindness. Once we were mother and son ; now. . . . Her thoughts faded away, and when the shuttle dropping from her hand awoke her, she sat wondering, clear-headed, and went away to ask her father to send out word by the next ship that Kebren was to come home. The ship bearing the letter of recall might fail to reach Kebren, it is true, and even if the ship were fortunate enough to meet him at one of the ports, he might prove unable to impose his will upon Rhesos ; but she must take risks. Her father, too, would like to have Kebren back ; he was lonely without Kebren. Never had two men loved each other more sincerely ; from the first their different natures had drawn them together. Moreover, her father had

come upon a head man who might replace Kebren with advantage. All things were working for her happiness, and satisfied that this was so, she fell to thinking that Kebren's return must not be spoilt by jars and quarrels. She foresaw no quarrel likely to arise between herself and Kebren—but Rhesos? Of him she knew nothing, and to prepare him for his father's coming she began to tell him all she knew of Egypt's pyramids and sphinxes

Grandfather hath told me of these things, mother, and there are many things in Egypt I look forward to hearing of besides the sphinxes and the pyramids. They have at Tanagra a bust of a princess who died thousand years ago; she is more alive in her black marble than thou and I are in our flesh, and there's a man at Tanagra who tells that there have been sculptures in Egypt—Rhesos dear, await thy father's return with patience, and remember that he must be allowed to tell his own story. But Kebren had scarcely crossed the threshold when his son cried: Father, hast thou been to Egypt? Yes, Rhesos, I have. And hast seen a gigantic lion? Themison at Tanagra tells me that the man who did that lion knew all there was to know about the beast. My dear Rhesos, thou art grown a rude fellow. Allow me to take pleasure in my sight and hearing of you all before I begin to talk of the lion! The slaves brought in torches and the talk continued long into the night, Rhesos waiting for the moment when Kebren would take pity on him and tell him if he had seen the lion, and if it were as wonderful as Themison had thought it. Next day he gave the attitude of the beast in words and afterwards in a drawing, but Kebren could not remember the lion, and in the hope of interesting Rhesos he talked of the monuments, the pyramids, the temples, the sphinxes, and the great granite Gods, their hands posed on their knees. Attitudes, he said, that represent eternity; a phrase that irritated Rhesos and obliged him to interrupt his father with the question whether he had come across any satyrs in Egypt. Kebren answered that he had heard of

satyrs in lower Egypt and supposed them to be plentiful about the source of the Nile. Nor are they extinct in Greece ; thy mother tells a queer story of one in the wooded hills about Marathon that was made drunk—— With my wine ! cried Biote. A few flagons, mother, and to them I owe it that they bought my satyr and his wife at Tanagra, and sold it too. I am glad to hear that thy group hath found admirers, Rhesos ; all the same, to take thy mother's wine without permission, to stop out all night, and to spend days in the woods, leaving her alone—— Grandfather is here ; and after all, she would do well to remember that I am no longer a child. I think there is very little thy mother does not understand, Rhesos. Mothers understand girls—— O, Rhesos ! I am sorry, mother. But why should we not go to Troy, Thrasilos and I ? Why is Troy forbidden to us ? I am sure thy mother hath very good reasons, Kebren replied, and Rhesos turned to leave the hall ; but at that moment, catching sight of Thrasilos peeping round the corner, he said : Thou hast come in time to hear why father and mother do not wish us to go to Troy. Rhesos, I did not say that you should not go to Troy ; your mother hath reasons that she will confide to me ; and meanwhile it were well that thou shouldst mend thy manners. But without waiting for further reproof, Rhesos joined Thrasilos in the doorway, announcing : I shall not return for supper to-night.

We should have brought some bread and cheese with us, Rhesos. We might have done that. Thrasilos. Art coming with me ? I am coming with thee, Thrasilos answered, reluctant, for he guessed his brother to be meditating some project of revenge. Father and mother are wrong to forbid us to journey to Troy, he continued, but by giving in to them we may get our way more readily than by defying them. Art curious to hear why Troy is forbidden to us ? I'll tell thee : for that they planned to go to Troy themselves after their marriage and never went thither. Jealousy, Thrasilos, jealousy that they are ashamed of and dare not avouch to each

other. We might have a look round, Rhesos, for the cubs that are often playing outside the den, waiting for old mother wolf to return with a hare or a lamb. We might do that and many other things, Rhesos answered, and we might say we were chased by the old wolf— but no ; the wood would be forbidden to us, like Troy. We should have stood our ground. This is not the way to Thermopylæ, Rhesos. I did not say it was ! cried Rheso . I think I shall go home, Thrasilos replied, and then rousing himself to unexpected courage, he added : I have done nothing to offend thee. The justice of this remark appealed to Rhesos, who begged his brother to understand that it was for them to show father and mother that they were not children any longer ; and coming out of the woods they stood watching a galley with a great sail set. All the rowers pulling hard, said Thrasilos, in the hope that the tide will have turned before they reach the strait. Mention not tides and currents at home, Rhesos remarked, lest swimming be forbidden to us ! We must do something to show them we are no longer children. If we don't, we shall be treated like children until—— Until we have beards and whiskers, Thrasilos interjected. That's the wisest thing thou hast said this afternoon ! Till we have beards, Rhesos repeated ; and forgetful of Thrasilos and the galley he stood, his eyes fixed on the island opposite, thinking that after swimming the strait they might hide without chance of discovery in the deep woods that clothed the hills, getting food from the shepherds or bringing enough food with them in a boat to last for a week. I am thinking, Thrasilos, how we may give our parents a great fright. They deserve one, he added, and we can put a good one upon them by stopping away a few days in the house we have built in the branches of the oak. Wolves cannot climb trees, said Thrasilos, but bears can ; moreover, we might fall from our house whilst we slept. Why then, Tanagra is not far off. I am not taken for a child there ; indeed, my models are as good as any they make. And whilst thou art at Tanagra, Rhesos, am I to remain at

home? Thou canst serve thine apprenticeship in Eubœa, where a temple is being built to Zeus; and when we have learnt our trades and saved some money, we shall be children no longer. Now, listen to me. If we're asked where we have been all the afternoon, we'll answer: Down by the shore, and we'll laugh and talk to each other, and after the meal sidle up to grandfather, and they'll soon come round. And at the end of the week it was plain that the house was divided, Otanes and the boys ranged against Kebren and Biote.

Father would be all right were it not for mother. Art awake, Thrasilos? A muffled voice answered: Yes, I'm awake; what is it? A riddle: When does a boy cease to be a boy? When he grows a beard, Thrasilos replied. With beard or without beard, said Rhesos, a man is not a man till he begins to get his own living; before then he is a child or a slave, which is the same thing. When money jingles in his pocket he chooses the work that it pleases him to do; he is no longer told to do work that he hates; and thou, Thrasilos, wouldst understand our need of money if thou hadst heard father and mother debating whether thou shouldst join grandfather in the counting-house or be put to sea. Was it not always agreed between us, Rhesos, that I should build temples and that thou shouldst carve statues? Is all this to be set at naught? And if I fail in the counting-house am I to be apprenticed to some other trade?—a fishmonger, at Athens, perchance! Father spoilt the fish he chopped, and grandfather Fishmonger bade him begone to his fancy. Why shouldn't the old man and the old woman, as thou callest them, Rhesos, do by us as they were done by? Rhesos did not answer, and the silence was broken by stifled sobs. Take thy head from the pillow, Thrasilos, and be a man. Thy words were, Rhesos, that a man is never a man till he earns his own living, and thou hast by nearly three years the advantage of me. We should have been twin brothers, and then we had no need to separate. There is no cause for tears, Thrasilos. Cause enough, I'm thinking, Thrasilos replied, since my life

will be far from thee. We shall save our lives yet, said Rhesos, and thou shalt hear how this may be done. And these words drying Thrasilos's tears, he listened to his brother's plan for saving him for architecture, a simple one that he (Rhesos) should earn money till there was enough—For the journey to Troy ! Thrasilos interjected. No, for a journey to Athens, where there is work for all, young and old.

And the boys having now a secret and an end to work for submitted to the control of their parents without discontent the deluded parents delighting in their obedience, now and then a little perturbed by a suspicion that they were hiding something, so closely was Thrasilos occupied with his brother's work, handing him the wet clay he needed for the statue, or sitting in woman's raiment till he ached, not daring to move lest he should disturb the fold that Rhesos was working on. Once Biote nearly surprised their secret. So absorbed in his work was Rhesos that he was unaware of her presence and babbled something about the journey to Athens to Thrasilos, who was sitting for a garment. So thou'rt planning a journey to Athens ? she asked. Is not everybody in Bœotia planning or meditating a journey to Athens, mother ? an answer that recalled to Biote the talk she had heard in the street on her way to the workshop. It is quite true, she said : the Parthenon is the talk of all Bœotia. We have been too long in Aulis and need a holiday. Grandfather, too, would like to see the Parthenon. I will speak to father about the journey, she added, and Rhesos in a mood of politeness put down his modelling-stick and opened the door for her. . . . Thou canst rest now, Thrasilos ; I have finished the fold. The chick was nearly out of its shell that time ! he continued. I don't know thy feelings about mother's projected visit to Athens, but I shall not be one of the party. When I go to Athens I'll go alone. But thou'lt take me with thee, Rhesos ? Of course I'll take thee, and three or four of my figures to show to Phidias. In a knapsack thy figures may be spoilt, said

Thrasilos. Were my figures packed in a knapsack all I should have to show to Phidias would be some lumps of wet clay ! I am doing a copy of the group of two women seated together, one telling stories, the other listening—like all copies, without the spirit of the original, but all the same good enough for Tanagra. That rascally overseer will try, of course, to get it as cheap as he can, and I shall try to get as much as I can for it. And thou, Thrasilos, wilt answer cautiously when questions are put to thee : Where is Rhesos ? Mother will be the first to give tongue, and then father will begin baying, but thou must answer that thou wert asleep when I left the house, or thou mayst speak of the window. And now no more ; I have the group to finish. Come and look at it. I think the overseer would pass it as it is, but I've still an hour left to work on it. The rest is with me ; thou'l hear it all in good time. Thrasilos left the workshop awed by his brother's wisdom and enterprise, and Rhesos worked on till the light failed. The group is finished, he said, doffing his smock, but a cart and a carrier are needed ; and after locking the door of the workshop he was fortunate enough to walk straight into the arms of the man he was looking for.

My group is finished and must go to the overseer at Tanagra before noon. Art free to take it thither ? Myself and my cart and my horse are at thy service for a fair price, young sir, and thou'l drive with me in the cart to care for thy statues, for the road is a rough one. At the corner of the lane, then, Rhesos answered, a couple of hours after daybreak. Tanagra is about four leagues, said the carrier, and a league an hour will be the most we shall do, having thought all the time not for the pace but for the safety of thy luggage. And it was the safety of his group that held Rhesos's attention all the way. I see a big stone in front of us ; keep to the right ! he cried. Later, half-a-league from Tanagra, the cart slipped into a hole in the road, and Rhesos foresaw great damage done to his group. A bruised or twisted limb for certain, he muttered, or

mayhap only a crumpled fold which I can restore in the presence of the overseer. . . . If I might have an hour to work on the group—— No need to work for an hour or for five minutes, replied the overseer, and his fingers went to make the correction ; but Rhesos stopped him, saying : May I restore the fold ? If it pleases thee : and the overseer asked abruptly if Rhesos had come to him for an opinion or to sell the group. To sell the group, Rhesos answered, for I would earn money to go to Athens with my brother, whose designs for the rebuilding of Troy would surprise thee. Life is dear in Athens, said the overseer, and I cannot give thee enough for the group—hast other specimens of thy work ? A copy of the group before thee I am bringing to Phidias in the hope that he will approve. He will like the gossips, replied the overseer ; I will give fifty drachmæ for it. Fifty drachmæ, Rhesos replied, would be little enough for a holiday in Athens. With two more figures I'll make it sixty drachmæ ; and between them it was planned that a cart should be sent next day from Tanagra. Now for the drachmæ, said the overseer ; the carrier will bring them—— I'd show them to my brother to-night, Rhesos interjected. As thou wilt ; and with the face of a man who is satisfied with the bargain he has made, the overseer added : Rolled in a skin and packed on thy shoulders like a knapsack, thou'l carry the burden without feeling it. For no more than half the way, Rhesos answered : and it was as he expected. Within a league of Aulis he would have given much to have the drachmæ off his shoulders for ten minutes. But how shall I get them up again if I loosen the straps ? he asked himself. With the aid of a peasant ? But so many pounds of dead weight would beget suspicion that there was money about ! And to avoid an evil blow he struggled on, passing the peasants with a careless: Good-evening, till he reached the corner of the wall over which Thrasilos would come at his whistle.

CHAPTER IX

I HEARD something fall, Biote ! Something fall ? she repeated, and Kebren threw his legs over the bedside. The thief must have escaped through an open window on hearing my foot-steps, he said, when he returned. Dost hear me, Biote ? I found but an open window, through which the thief must have climbed on a chair that canted. Dost hear me ? Well enough, Kebren ; no need to nudge me. No robber but an open window—— And the house door open ! he interjected. The boys in their hurry left it open, she answered. Hast forgotten their prank to spend the night in the branches of a tree rather than in a warm bed ? A stifled, gurgling laugh, and the twain slept, their backs turned on each other, till morning, and the first meal was over before Kebren asked Timotheus if Rhesos and Thrasillo斯 had returned from the woods. Timotheus reported their room empty, and Kebren sought Biote, saying : The children have not come back ; and he asked how much of the night it was their wont to spend in the branches of their tree. She answered that she thought they had outgrown their strange habit of sleeping in a tree since their escape from the wolf. Of their escape from the wolf I know nothing, he replied, but I beg that their grandfather shall hear naught of this ; he might imagine a rape by pirates—— She raised her hand, imposing silence, saying : Otanes is at the door, come to inquire why the boys are not about.

To reassure Otanes Kebren avowed his belief in a prank : Played upon us for our refusal to send them to Troy. Well or ill thou mayst have done in forbidding them Troy, Otanes answered, but I acquit them of all malice, a mere boyish prank ; and I would remind thee, Kebren, that thy children's conduct is but an echo of thine own. Eighteen years ago at the bidding of a God thou didst leave Athens to see the bays of Aulis ; is it strange, then, that thy sons, a sculptor and an

architect in the making, should plan to go away to Athens to see the Parthenon ? Thy words, Otanes, will be easier to consider when our children return to us, Kebren answered, and as parents and grandparent stood, uncertain, Photius arrived with the news that his boat, securely moored to the wharf overnight, was missing this morning. We are sorry thy boat is missing, Photius, but why bring the news of thy lost boat to us ? Biote asked. For that thy sons may have gone for a night's fishing as before, honourable lady. A boat can always be paid for, said Kebren but money cannot bring back our sons if the sea have taken them. And if they have put up a sail and made for Athens, he continued, a wave will swamp the boat, for they have little skill in the management of a boat. I would not go so far as that, Photius answered ; they have been out with me fishing. And at the thought that his sons had ventured into the sea in an open boat Kebren's torment began again. My boat is a good one, sir, and any damage that may be done to her—— We will pay ! And for the great catch of fishes that I have missed, my boat having been filched from me ? Father is right ; they have gone to Athens, said Biote. Or maybe to Troy, Kebren answered. Not to Troy, sir, for we had more than a single talk about sailing to Troy. I told them of the currents they would meet, and heard thy son Rhesos whisper : Athens will be an easier voyage. But my boat will be paid for, sir, and the fishes I have lost ? They will be paid for. Wherefore I'll hasten to the tavern to drink to the safe voyaging of thy sons ! Thou to thy drink offerings, I to Tanagra, cried Kebren, and a few minutes later he was riding lustily, his thoughts on the cleft out of which the oracle of Amphiaraos spoke, and no sooner had the rocky hill come into sight than a dread began lest he might find it besieged by eager applicants. But the shrine was almost deserted, only an old man seated on a stone by a gate, a staff of gnarled olive-wood by his side, a peaked hat drawn over his head, his tunic, tattered, filthy and begrimed with smoke, declaring him a beggar.

What may be his errand ? Kebren asked himself. Hope must have left him long ago. Warden or beggar, which ? And without hazarding another guess he looked into the old man's face, for he seemed to see it dimly in his memory. We have met before ? he asked, and the old man answered : Ay, I mind me, many years ago, by the bridge over the river Asopos. And didst get an answer from the oracle of Tropionios ? No answer at all, said the old man, and ever since I have wandered, the sport of the Gods, drifting from one misfortune to another, like Odysseus himself on leaving Calypso's island. Didst thou then meet a Calypso ? Kebren asked. Women were never in my way, sir, nor I in theirs. I was once a well-to-do man, and, as thou seest, I have been drifting down the stream of life till I came to this stone, where I sit from morn to evening calling to the wayfarer, and if he heeds me I tell him for what fee he may learn the future. I am here for whatever broken meats may be left over, and the right to sleep in the shelter of the oak-trees. And thou, sir— fortune hath favoured thee in Aulis, I can see that, and thou'l allow me for old acquaintance's sake to announce thee to the oracle. That she may give thee all her attention I must inform her of thy business—— Which is to inquire if I should seek my sons at the Piræus. Of thy sons, sir, I know nothing, but a young man that might be thy son came from Aulis yesterday, a sculptor, to make sale of his statues. My son of a certainty, and I need not trouble the oracle. But my dole ! cried the old man. Half-a-handful of silver for thy news, said Kebren, and a handful thou'l throw down the cleft for the pythoness. An hour's rest for me and my horse and we shall be able to continue the journey to Athens, and at a pace that will make up for the time we have lost in coming round by Tanagra.

His mind was distraught for his sons' safety, but he could not forget the old man whom he had first met eighteen years ago by the bridge-head of the river Asopos, and he was still considering the old man's story as he rode through Dekeleia.

On coming to the olive garths he remembered the night he had been chased by dogs, and soon after the murmur of the Kephisos reminded him that he was nigh the end of his journey. At the sight of Athè the horse pricked up his ears and ambled into a sort of trot, but to leave Athens he was not easily persuaded. His instinct does not deceive him, Kebren said to himself; these rocks do not end in a stable! And when he reined in to question a fisherman he learnt that a boat from Aulis would take four or five days to reach the Piræus. I would hire a boat to meet them, he said. Art willing to put forth with me? To put forth this evening, sir? The sea is a big place and we might miss them, and thy state would be worse than before. Thou hast ridden hard, sir. I have indeed, Kebren answered, throwing himself out of the saddle, and no sooner was the weight off the back of the brown stocky animal with large hooves and hairy fetlocks, and no point to recommend him except a singularly handsome head, than he began to shake himself, and so vigorously that the fishermen wondered at the reason for all this shaking. Flinging his head up into the air and dipping it to his knees, he shook it, his mane and tail waving in the wind, and a fine and strange spectacle it was, one to admire rather than to explain. I have ridden him too fast, said Kebren; we are as tired one as the other; and taking the horse by the bridle he led him to a tavern. A pail of gruel for my horse, a bed for me! he cried to the inn-keeper. I have ridden from Aulis. May I not press upon thee a bowl of soup, sir? A bowl of soup will be welcome in the morning, Kebren answered, and he sought his bed, to be kept awake, however, by anxious thoughts that permitted only vagrant dozes. All night the house seemed beset by noises of rain on the roof and wind in the streets, and he leapt from a doze to look round; and finding only blackness on the stairs he returned to his bed, to struggle and to scream from nightmare to nightmare till it was time to go to the Piræus. But why go to the Piræus? Did the fisherman not tell me that the sea would bring me no news for five or six or

seven days? Last night I was too tired to think of these days, but now I can think of nothing else, myself sitting watching the sea from morning to evening and for a change fixing my eyes blankly on the Parthenon. Its beauty is great, no doubt, but beauty passes unperceived by a man in search of his sons.

A sudden twinge of pain reminded him that he must go to the baths : Hot water will remove some of the stiffness from my limbs ; and after his bath he bethought himself of his horse, whom he found too tired to struggle to his legs. A horse lying down hath always seemed a strange sight to me, he said to the ostler ; a horse looks as if he was intended to stand for ever. He hath been on his legs and fed well, the ostler answered, but he needs a day's rest—welcome news, for Kebren was in no wise minded to mount and ride. Whither he should ride he did not know, and distraught, his gaze turned upward to the Parthenon ; then he bethought himself of the theatre, and going thither he scanned the faces, hoping to discover a friend. But all were unknown to him except the manager, who knew him at once, and after listening to his story said : I would ask thee for old time's sake to spend the day with me, but I have many appointments, and my actors are waiting now to rehearse— Stay ! a thought has just come to me. Why shouldest thou not take the rehearsal if thou hast leisure ? If I have leisure ! Seven days of waiting for news of my sons is my lot, and the rehearsal will indeed be a distraction. And with rehearsals to occupy his mind he did not feel the time going by. But a few days later he was sitting on the steps of the Parthenon thinking that unless his sons had met with shipwreck their boat must now at any moment come into sight along the coast. Above him was the blue day with the still unpainted Parthenon upon it, and round him hundreds of slaves and ox-carts, a great shouting and cracking of whips. But what are all these things to me if my sons are drowning, he asked, and he was about to surrender himself to such grief as drives a man mad when two boys

carrying a heavy box between them up the hillside came into view.

At the sound of his father's voice Thrasilos dropped his end of the box, but by a desperate clutch Rhesos saved it from falling. I just saved it, father ; don't be alarmed. And the accident so narrowly averted seeming to leave Kebren unconcerned, Rhesos added : In that box is my group, and if it had fallen only a lump of wet clay would have remained of my work. Two ships are searching for you, said Kebren, and I have been round the harbour in a boat ; messengers have crossed Attica for news of you — Thou'll tell us about that later, father. Yonder is Phidias coming down the steps of the Parthenon ; I must run to meet him. . . . He skips up the steps like a goat, said Thrasilos ; he can think only of what Phidias will say about his work I'll open the box to save time, he added, looking up at his overjoyed father, tall and erect as a poplar, who watched Phidias, a short, thick-bearded man, descend the steps, his long, ungainly feet picking the way carefully, Rhesos by his side ready to catch him should he trip. So this is thy group ? Phidias asked. I like it—Tanagra ! Aulis and Tanagra are all I know of this world, Rhesos replied. We arrived this morning from Aulis, my brother Thrasilos and I. My sons' grandfather is Otanes, the great shipper, and I am Kebren, his associate, son of the great fishmonger of Athens, of whom thou mayst have heard, sir. I have eaten his fish and remember him by it, Phidias answered. I am glad that the taste hath lingered over twenty years ! Kebren replied. Father, thou hearest my group approved by the master ? But although overjoyed by Rhesos's success, Kebren could not withhold from Phidias the story of the prank his sons played upon him, going away in the middle of the night in a boat stolen from a fisherman. Not stolen, father, cried Rhesos, borrowed ! A little difference that I'll allow you to settle between you, Phidias interjected. But as I see that a new sculptor hath been born to Greece, he shall get his training under my eyes. My second son, Thrasilos, Kebren

began—— Ah, is he, too, a sculptor? An architect, Thrasilos answered timidly. I have brought my drawing—— Which thou'l't show to our architects. And leaving the youths to wonder what was going to happen next, Phidias and Kebren talked together of the building of the Parthenon, Phidias saying that Boeotia had contributed very little, Kebren answering: Otanes will send a big gift of money when he hears of the great praise thou hast given to his grandson. Be not mistaken, Kebren; I did not praise Rhesos to get money to complete the building of the Parthenon; his group earned my praise. Phidias lowered his voice, and it seeming to the lads that he wished to talk privily with their father, they dropped out of earshot, curious though they were to hear the master's words, which were doubtless about themselves. The men talked together a little while, and then calling to his sons Kebren told them that when they had obtained pardon from their mother and their grandfather for the trouble their flight had occasioned, they could return to Athens to learn the trades for which nature had destined them. When do we return home, father? Rhesos asked, to-morrow or to-night? To-morrow will be better, Phidias interjected; the roads are not always safe at night. And now may we not walk round the new temple of Pallas Athene, father? We may indeed, Kebren answered, and you will do well to glut your eyes. I have travelled the world over and have seen nothing like it.

Kebren's innocent admiration of his work pleased Phidias, who accompanied him a little way along a road deeply rutted by oxen burdened with the weight of marble blocks. He pointed out the site destined for a statue of Athene, and when he bade them good-bye (smiling, they thought, rather sadly), Thrasilos asked his father if he would take them to see the theatre in which he had fulfilled the parts of messengers. You would see the theatre? We would indeed, was Thrasilos's quick rejoinder, and a play by Æschylus, or Euripides. The plays to be performed later are now in

rehearsal, Kebren replied, and whilst waiting for you to arrive in the boat which you borrowed from Photius without consulting him, I attended a rehearsal—I may say that I took the rehearsal at the request of the manager. Took the rehearsal, father, after all these years ! I just stepped back into my own natural life, said Kebren, and was congratulated by the manager upon some small improvements. We would prefer to see thee rehearse a play, father, rather than to see the public performance. I thank thee, Thrasilos, for thy good opinion of me. Had you arrived a few days earlier—But we knew not thou wouldest take a rehearsal in the manager's absence ! Nor did ye know the anxiety that you caused, Kebren replied ; and it would seem that ye are not yet aware of it. Mother's anger, if she be angry with us, will pass when she hears that Phidias liked my group, Rhesos said, with a yawn, angering the even-tempered Kebren, who reminded his son that it was not his mother but his father who was the judge on all such matters—words that caused Thrasilos to tremble ; and to save his father and brother from an unpleasant wrangle he spoke of the view of Athens under the sunrise that awaited them in the morning. Thou speakest with as much assurance as if thou hadst ordered the sunrise thyself ! Kebren answered, with an almost smile. The sun will not rise at my bidding, father, but there will be a sunrise. And whilst talking of the morning light that would show Athens to the most advantage, they arrived at the theatre. A rehearsal was in progress, and Kebren asked for permission to attend it with his sons, and permission being given, the elated youths put questions to their father, but were checked by the words : Hush ! Silence is enjoined. After the rehearsal Rhesos and Thrasilos, still elated, were taken to an eating-house, the resort of the actors ; there were introductions, and anecdotes were told, and they would have liked to accompany the actors on their daily walk to the river Kephisos. But Kebren insisted on showing them round the city, saying that the Kephisos was too far, and at the end of a very happy

evening Rhesos and Thrasilos were glad to return to the inn for supper. Better even than the supper was the bed that awaited them ; it seemed years since they had lain in one ; and Thrasilos would have slept another couple of hours if Rhesos's voice had not cried in his ear : Awake, awake, Thrasilos, and tell us what hath become of thy sunrise and all the temples underneath it.

I hear thy words but understand them not at all, Thrasilos replied, rising from the bed. If thou art too sleepy to understand my words, mayhap thou wilt believe thine eyes ! A fog hath come up from the sea during the night, Thrasilos said, speaking from the window, and the passengers, belated and wondering, ask for guidance. A horseman reins up his horse, but the passenger is under the animal's hooves. The fog makes an end of our hope for another day in Athens, Rhesos replied. Father cries to us to hasten, Rhesos, and I hear the sound of hooves halting at the front door. And it was whilst drinking a stirrup-cup that Thrasilos remembered Photius's boat. I have sent a message to the Piræus, Kebren answered, and the fisherman with whom thou didst leave it will return it to Photius. Now into your saddles. I stifle in this fog and would ride out of it through the Acharnian Gate. The gate, said Thrasilos, through which thy way led on the night the God spoke in thine ear, bidding thee to Aulis. Rhesos was about to speak, but he allowed his brother to finish the story they had often heard at their father's knees. Said a soldier : The road will lead thee to the bridge-head, and thence Aulis is not more than twelve leagues, a pleasant moonlight stroll ! Often they had laughed at the soldier's reply, and it was amusing to laugh at it again, to halloo through the mist and to ride in the direction of voices, to halloo once more and to be answered by receding voices. At last a peasant ploughing came into view, and taking his hands from the stilts he began to tell that they would recover the track at the end of his vore, and a long telling it proved to be. So thick was the mist that naught was seen of the field but a

shadowy hedge, with an elm rising out of it like a whiff of smoke, but the wooden plough and its two small oxen were quite plain, and unmindful of their father's efforts to follow the Boeotian dialect, Rhesos and Thrasilos admired the beasts, one white, the other red, with long, curving horns and small, cloven hooves. Glad of a pause in their work they stood still as sculpture, their breath rising slowly from their stooped, moist muzzles. Thou canst not miss the track ; the sun is coming out, the peasant called after them. I hope thou speakest truly, Kebren called in return, for should the sun prove a laggard we are lost indeed. But soon after a copper-coloured sun struggled valiantly with the mist, and before a league was accomplished they were riding through vineyards and cornfields dozing in the nellow light of the September day.

The coming year, said Kebren, begins in the dying year ; and his words producing no response he looked from one son to the other. You remember the early ploughman ? he asked. The early ploughman ? Rhesos repeated. He who directed us soon after we left Athens, Kebren answered. Yes, I remember, father. Are you, then, heedless of the countryman's toil, of everything except the placing of a pillar and the carving of a nose ? The Parthenon rests on the back of that countryman who drove his plough through the crabbed little field. His labour in the field is not unworthy, Rhesos, inasmuch as it allows thee to labour upon a statue for the adornment of a temple ; and the same reproof I administer to thee, Thrasilos. Without the oxen and the plough, and the peasant with the goad behind the oxen, the walls of the Parthenon could not be raised. I cannot accept art as worthy if it shuts out all other comprehension of life. The boys did not answer, thinking silence was the best weapon of defence, and they rode on without speaking till at last Kebren, unable to contain himself any longer, said : Your mother will be pleased to see your faces again, no doubt, but she'll have a great deal to say about the prank you played on us. Nor is

this the first anxiety you have caused her. It may be as well to tell you that her words to me were that she was glad of my homecoming for more reasons than one. Thou'rt thinking now, father, of the journey to Troy. Thou and she were agreed—— No, Rhesos, I am not thinking of that journey, but of thy wilfulness in spending whole days in the dangerous woods, nights, too, building a shelter amid the branches of a tree. To escape from the wolves, what else, father? Thou wouldst not have us overtaken and eaten? Better that we should be in the branches with Ajax in our arms—— Ajax? Kebren asked, astonished. Who is Ajax? A wolf cub that is growing into the handsomest wolf in Greece. The handsomest wolf in Greece! repeated the perplexed Kebren. An affectionate animal, Rhesos continued, that will know thee to be my father and will receive thee joyfully when we visit him in his kennel. And to escape from further misunderstandings he told Kebren that Ajax was stolen by them before he was a month old.

Three of the cubs ran back into the earth, but Ajax having ventured farther than the others, we picked him up, and each taking his turn to carry him we were within a few yards of the tree in which we had built our shelter when Thrasilos said: She is after us! We had only just time to climb into the branches before the wolf sprang, but fell back, wolves not having claws for the climbing of trees. Thrasilos was for throwing her the cub, but I was for keeping him, saying: If we could only stop his whining she might leave us for the sake of the others awaiting her in the den. But wolves live only in the present, father, and we might have been in the tree all night if a shepherd had not come by with his dogs and blown a signal for help on his pipe; and mother wolf, seeing herself outnumbered—— Slunk away, Kebren interjected; but didst thou find some complacent bitch to rear Ajax? We searched the town for one, and Ajax would have died if I hadn't bethought myself of a rag dipped in warm milk. He was stubborn enough, and a hard job it was to get enough milk

down his throat to keep him alive, but in the second week a change came over him, and he caught at the cloth eagerly as he would at the dug, and when he had had enough he climbed about me, clasping me with his paws. As soon as he could lap we gave him soup with soft meat in it, but he didn't begin to thrive till we gave him raw meat. And better than his meat he likes honey cake, said Thrasilos ; he knows supper-time, when it will be handed round and if we delay to give him a piece he reproaches us with his eyes. He won't snap, but will take his piece quietly into a corner that he may enjoy it the more— And he won't worry for more when he hath eaten his share, cried Rhesos. He is satisfied always with just treatment—a handsome, shaggy animal with a bushy tail, on good terms with everybody in the house but acknowledging none but me. He comes to me when thou art away, said Thrasilos, but if we were to turn him out into the woods to shift for himself, he'd come round the house after thee. Which is but reasonable, since it was I that mothered him ! thou'lt love him as much as we do, father, when thou seest him running up and down in his pen, putting back his ears when we call out his name ; he loves his name. How is it that I have never heard of this admirable animal before ? Kebren asked. Thou hast been but a fortnight back from the sea, father ; and most of the fortnight, Rhesos added, hath been spent in the counting-house with grandfather. He waited for an answer, wondering of what his father was thinking. Thinking of the Parthenon ? of Phidias ? of Ajax ? he inquired. If I was thinking of anything, Kebren replied, it was of the leaves showering about us, without knowledge of their destination, like ourselves ; and the remark seeming to Rhesos trite and old-fashioned, he laughed. Laughing at thine old father's philosophy, Kebren said good-humouredly. Is it not true, Rhesos, that we are as casual as the leaves ? But thou'rt too young to philosophise. Still, thou hast thoughts, for to be mortal is to think. Of what art thou thinking ? Not of what I am saying to thee, that I can see ! My thoughts

were not on the witlessness of leaves, father, but on yon hound going by bent upon his instinct : he scents a bear, and his stern is wagging in his confidence that he can catch the beast by himself. And thou, Thrasilos, of what art thou thinking ? Kebren asked. Of riding on ahead to tell the huntsman that he must cast forward, Thrasilos answered. I would not have the boar escape, he called back. And they pricked on, leaving their father asking himself if Rhesos was a judge of words.

Of shapes and forms he certainly is, but of his judgment of words we know nothing. He is a sculptor in hand and heart. But a mind is needed for sculpture as much as for philosophy. And his thoughts turning to the eagerness with which both his sons had left him to follow a boar hunt, he defended them against a charge of selfishness, saying : Every youth would have left his father to ride home alone that he might follow a hunt. I do not blame them. But my dream on board the galley, was to return to Aulis to be my sons' companion, to share their ideas and ambitions—a vain dream, shattered when I stepped on shore to hear that I had done well to return, for my children needed a parent's admonition. Thrasilos she could still manage, but Rhesos was beyond her. She had all the pleasure there was to be had out of the children, and she welcomed me home again to thwart them, to deny them the right to go to Troy ; and seeing that I, too, was against them, they embarked in a fisherman's boat. But when we met on the steps of the Parthenon and Rhesos opened his box and showed his group to Phidias, I rejoiced, and when Phidias said : Let them come to Athens to learn their trades, again I rejoiced, although I knew that Athens would separate me from them. I came back for their sakes, looking forward to telling the stories I had fixed in my memory for their delight ; but they are young men now, or very nearly, and will leave us in a few days to come back to tell me their stories.

From far and near the horns sounded, and a great boar, his

sow beside him, came galloping down a glade, leading a long string of younglings only just off the dogs. Soon they will be surrounded, said Kebren, the old boar ripping up a hound or two before the hunters come up with their long spears. And so vivid was his foreseeing of the hounds rushing upon their quarry, tearing and snarling and being tossed hither and thither, that he forgot his horse, and the animal grazed, Kebren sitting like a stock upon him. At last the forest was silent, and his thoughts, too, were hushed. Nothing remained but a sense of his unlikeness, an unhappiness from which he could not escape, having root in the very substance of his being ; and more than once on his way home he muttered : An unhappiness which may one day press me to my own destruction.

CHAPTER X

AJAX dwelt in a little paddock enclosed with high railings, and up and down it he ran, laying his ears back when Rhesos called : Ajax ! Have a care, Rhesos ! cried Kebren. But Ajax had no thought for biting the hand that had fed him from cubhood, only for licking it ; and when Rhesos opened the door at the back of the den and closed it behind him, the wolf pounced upon him, laying him flat, and again there was a cry from the anxious father. Rhesos, calling to Ajax to get down, sought in his basket for mutton bones : these beguiled the wolf for a moment, but he was soon on his hind-legs again, his front paws about his master's neck, going away again for a crunch and returning for another romp. His love for thee is very touching, Rhesos, and thou art right—a handsome animal, as handsome as any I have seen, with intelligent, watchful eyes, and ears that lie back with pleasure when he hears his name. And there were further manifestations of affection and another distribution of victuals, which Ajax brought into his den, to return to when he was free from visitors. He'll miss me terribly, said Rhesos, but every

week I'll try to come to Aulis to make sure that he is not being neglected. But art sure thou'rt leaving us to-night, father ? And all the way to the house Rhesos tried to dissuade Kebren, Thrasilos lingering in the rear, running forward when he could stifle his sobs to beg his father to stay with them. We thought thou hadst returned from the seas to tell us stories. Remain a little while longer ; leave us, since thou must, by the next ship. Thy grief will be the same, Thrasilos, whether I sail to-night or in a week's time. Wherefore betake ye to your crafts in Athens, looking forward to my return, which will be when you have learnt them. But when we have learnt them, father, we shall have to start on a long itinerary, journeying from city to city all over the Greek world, building temples and carving statues. Let us forget the misfortunes that lie ahead of us, Kebren answered ; those that are nigh are more than enough. I must leave Aulis, for there is no work for me here. The counting-house, father ? Every man must have a tryst in the future, Thrasilos. My departure will be broached at the evening meal, and do ye abstain from questions. Should Thrasilos blubber, said Rhesos, I'll pinch him. And I'll pinch thee back again ! cried Thrasilos. I would have no squabbling, Kebren interjected reprovingly. I'll plead sleepy-head, father, and we'll meet thee on the wharves later. . . . But Biote's impatience made Rhesos's plea needless ; she bade her sons to their beds when the meal was over, and waited for Otanes to ask Kebren if he might not be dissuaded.

In the past I have always had to think of others first, Kebren replied, and Biote looked up, surprised by an unwonted firmness in his voice. For long years thou wert happy in Aulis. True, Otanes, but my sons are going to Athens to learn their crafts and there is no work for me here. I smouldered in thy counting-house for ten years, and might have continued to smoulder if thou hadst not bidden me to the Ægean to reorganise thy trade. Thou camest to us a wanderer, said Biote, and wouldest be a wanderer again. And whilst

Kebren considered her words, she added : Thou art like thine own sons, and wouldest prove thyself in some adventure a worthy parent. I will leave you both to settle how long Kebren's probation shall last. She gathered up her work, and when the door closed the men sat abashed, Otanes breaking silence with the words : The house will be lonely without thee. Without me and without my sons, of whom I have seen little, Biote having got all the pleasure of watching their bodies and their minds pass from boyhood into manhood. She misconceives the purpose of my going, that there is little work for me to do in the countin ;-house and that I may prove more successful in finding new outlets for our trade in the Euxine than I was in the *Aegean* ; nor have I hope of heroic adventures for myself ; my thoughts will be always on the advancement of our business, and the hour that is even now passing swiftly (the *Calypso* looses for the Hellespont at daybreak) I would apply to learning from thee some part of thy knowledge of the Greek cities, Sinope and Dioscurias and others, all that thou canst call to mind. It is many a year since I traded in the Euxine, replied Otanes, but I'll tell all that I remember ; perchance a word here and there may help thee. And he rambled on pleasantly till Kebren rose to his feet to keep his tryst with his sons on the wharf. We shall meet again two years hence under this roof, he said, moving towards the door. Otanes did not answer, but his face spoke for him, and Kebren read : I may not be here. And to make an end of the constraint of parting, he crossed the threshold abruptly, delaying in the courtyard to hear the bar of the door being put up : but he waited in vain, for Otanes had told Timotheus to leave the door on the jar lest Kebren might rue his departure and return to them. . . . How still the night is, and how starry. I shall hear doves coo again, but mayhap never in the dove-cote above the gateway ; and as he wandered through the familiar streets he scanned every angle as if he were afraid he might forget them. At last the shipping came into view, anchored in midstream, and choosing

a seat amid the bales of merchandise ready for loading, he awaited the arrival of his sons, interested in the white stars shining through the rigging and in the black shadow that a great barrel threw across the moonlit wharf, his meditation disturbed by Rhesos's voice : We escaped from the house as quietly as we did on the night we sailed to Athens, leaving mother and grandfather sleeping in their beds. But how will you get back to the house without your absence being discovered ? We shall tap at Timotheus's window, Rhesos answered. Now to the story of the pyramid, father. Story of the pyramid ? Kebren repeated, with a false note of surprise in his voice. From whom did you hear of this story ? We've not heard the whole story, said Thrasilos, only hints from mother ; and when we begged her to describe the pyramid to us, she could only say : I have never been out of Aulis ; you must ask your father. But from whom didst thou hear the story, father ? From somebody whilst thou wast there ? Yes, Kebren answered ; a story well enough for those who have seen the pyramid, but words have little power to help you to see in your thoughts that mountain of stone pointing upwards, black amid the stars. But thou speakest to an architect and a sculptor, said Rhesos, and we can see in our minds a great square of stone sloping into a point. Thou hast sight of it, Kebren replied, and when I tell that twenty thousand slaves were working on it for twenty years, you will know enough of the pyramid to understand the great skill that was needed to rob it. Mother spoke of a secret door, said Thrasilos. A door there was certainly, else the royal corpse of Cheops could not have passed into the funeral chamber. But the door was sought in vain—— Till the man thou didst meet in thy walk under the pyramid pointed it out to thee ?

He came upon me one night on footsteps so silent that I was near to screaming, and called out : Cheops, is it thou ? for truly I thought it was the ghost of Cheops. Thy pardon, he said, for breaking in upon thy dream, sir. My dream ? I

repeated. Thou wert dreaming belike of Cheops lying yonder in his coffin in the central chamber. Tell me, said I, since thou knowest the story, how many years he hath been waiting for his resurrection—the belief of Egypt thou must know, Thrasilos, is that the dead rise to mingle among the Gods, to become Gods, and to return to earth again after thousands of years in the shapes of animals. Among the Gods of Egypt one at least is hawk headed, and the crocodile is sacred. Wert thou not fearfu of such monsters, father? Thrasilos, cease thine interruptions, said Rhesos, or we shall not hear the end of the story. Did the stranger show thee Cheops in his coffin? Cheops hath not been in his pyramid for countless ages, Kebren answered. His pyramid was broken into by robbers soon after his death. And it was from the stranger thou didst hear of the robbery? Thrasilos asked. Yes. But how did he know that the pyramid had been broken into? Did the robbers leave the door open behind them? No, they closed it, and so well did they close it that none hath been able to discover it since. The pyramid was built, said Rhesos, thousands of years before Homer. My very words to the stranger, Kebren replied, and his answer to me was that his own ancestor had raided Africa, bringing back whole tribes to build it. My ancestor, he continued, designed the sheathing of this great heap of stones in slabs closely fitted together, making the task of finding the doorway all but impossible. The climber would have to test every slab in turn. But the builders? cried I. Only a few hundreds knew of the placing of the door, he answered, and there is always a great massacre of slaves at the completion of a royal tomb. But one escaped? I asked. One certainly escaped, said he, for the king was not lying in his tomb many months before it was robbed. Hath any then entered the tomb since that first violation of it? None, the stranger answered. And the secret of the tomb is again lost? Not lost, he replied. The number of the slab behind which is the door is given in a manuscript written by my ancestor, the trusted

confidant of the king. And no suspicion fell upon thy ancestor I asked. None ; it was he who discovered the robbers at their work. A sterile secret, I said, is deposited in the manuscript if Cheops hath been robbed of all his riches and his mummy broken up and scattered. Not altogether sterile, the stranger replied, for the robbers could not take all the gold and jewels away in a single night and dared not leave the pyramid open ; and their plundering being interrupted, they dared not return to it. But thou'l be able to judge better how such things came to pass when thou hast heard the story.

Enough it is for this evening to tell thee how one night, whilst walking like thee here beneath the pyramid dreaming of the great king, his benefactor, my ancestor raised his eyes, and what he saw was the door wide open, with a ladder reaching to it. Robbers are rifling the king's coffin ! he said, and without giving a thought to the builder who had escaped the massacre and revealed the secret, or to what might be his own fate if he interrupted the robbers in their work, he ascended the ladder of some thirty rungs (the exact height needed) and stepped within the pyramid. No sooner was he within it than hands were laid upon him and a scimitar drawn to strike off his head, but the chiefest of the band said : Not here, for this man was the trusted friend of Cheops, and if he is not seen in Thebes again, a search will be made. Better it will be to load him with as much as he can carry and proceed with him into the desert—— And in a safe place cut off his head ! cried a robber. No, a safer plan will be to give him part of the spoil, the chief answered, thereby making him no less guilty than ourselves. But he will deny his guilt ! cried another robber. We can make his denial useless, said the chief, by inscribing his confession on his skin with the point of a dagger and rubbing into the wounds a fluid that will keep it plain as long as his flesh holds together ; and it was not until his confession was beyond hope of effacement that my ancestor was released. How he died is not known, nor why the manuscript was not sold before it came into my hands.

A great sum of money would be needed to buy the manuscript, I said. No more than twenty golden talents, the stranger answered, and whilst walking towards the Sphinx I considered the amount. We know nothing of the Sphinx' cried Thrasilos, and Kebren replied that the Sphinx was a great rock carved into the shape of a lioness with a woman's head. Only the head now shows above the sand—— How then do we know that the body is a lioness's? Thou'l hear more of the Sphinx, Thrasilos, during the course of the story. The stranger wore a great dagger in his girdle, and seeing that his hand often went to it I spoke of the desert as a tryst for robbers, adding that I was not afraid, for I carried but a few small coins in my pocket. Nobody but a fool would walk about the desert with twenty golden talents packed on his back, he answered. All the same, he proposed to return to the pyramid, having little taste for solitary places, and my confidence in him being thereby restored I said that my father-in-law, though a rich man, would be unwilling to buy the manuscript unless it could be shown that the robbers of the pyramid had left much behind that they could not carry away. My good sir, we should have to open the pyramid to show that, he replied, bringing with us a ladder thirty feet high, which was done by the first robbers, but which is not easy to do to-day. It matters little to thee whether the hoard be in the pyramid or in the Sphinx; the manuscript tells that if a pit be dug in a certain spot in the sand a stairway will be discovered leading to a temple carved in the Sphinx herself, and it is in this temple that a great part of Cheops's wealth will be found. I must have my father-in-law's consent before buying a manuscript so costly, I answered, and will ask for a month's delay; but to assure thee of my good faith I will buy a less costly manuscript of thee for my own collection. Thyself art warrant of thy good faith, sir, he replied, and the name of thy father-in-law, Otanes, the great trader of Aulis, is known and honoured from Egypt to the Pillars of Hercules. Moreover, I have at present no complete manuscript, merely

fragments—torn, frayed and blotted fragments, nothing that I'd care to offer to a scholar. I have no claim to scholarship in Egypt, I answered him, and he replied : The manuscript I shall reserve for thee and for Otanes will come with a Greek translation, made by my grandfather. Thou speakest fairly, I said. I leave Thebes to-morrow for Carthage in the hope of getting several concessions important to our trade, and in a month from now thou'l find me at the very spot on which we now stand.

On our way back to Thebes I heard him chattering as one hears a bird, for my mind was away, and we parted as people part in a dream, abruptly, with the words : In a month ! on our lips. I doubted not he would keep the manuscript for me, even if he were offered as much money as he expected to receive for it, and all the way to Carthage my mind was torn with thoughts how I might persuade Otanes. Even in speech, I said to myself, it would be difficult to make him see and hear as I saw and heard. A letter hath never convinced anybody, won anybody over. He will throw it aside. I should have gone to him myself. In Carthage I thought of little but the manuscript and hastened back to Thebes hoping to find a letter from Otanes at my factor's. There was one, but not a word in it about the manuscript. All the same, I spent evening after evening at the pyramid, wondering what might have happened. At last I heard footsteps and turned, but the man I saw was a stranger, who asked : Art here to buy a manuscript ? and without waiting for my reply, he continued : The dealer is dead ; robbers broke in. But, father, how could he know all this unless he was the robber ? If he were the robber, Thrasilos, he would have offered to sell me the manuscript. Let us go to Egypt, father, for a great search. I would indeed take you with me to Egypt, Kebren answered, if I were not trading in the Euxine. The captain calls to me. Good-bye, dear sons. As he advanced towards the gangway he repeated : Good-bye, dear sons. I leave you on a happy morning. . . . Bring us back stories

from Egypt, from Persia ! the youths cried, but the ship was in midstream, too far for them to get an answer, and laggard they returned to Aulis before the crowing of the first cock. As sleepy-headed as ourselves, Rhesos said, to encourage Thrasilos into speech. But they had been so long out of bed that they could think only of sleep, and it was not till next morning, when Biote reproved them for being late for the morning meal, that Rhesos began to consider how he might withstand his mother.

They were going to Athens to help Phidias and Kallikrates and Iktinos to complete the Pantheon, and he was impatient to make this plain to her ; but the body of the hall being filled with house-servants and slaves, he postponed his challenge. Biote, too, postponed hers. She knew that Rhesos would not consent to her coming to Athens ; even if he did, how was she to bring her father with her ? Somebody must remain to look after the business. All the same, she could not and would not consent to their going to Athens alone. Kebren was gone and would not return for two or three years, and she raged sullenly against him. At last the slaves and servants rose from their seats to return to their work in little groups and singly ; the decisive moment had come. I do not know why we are all so silent, said Thrasilos. Why indeed ? said Rhesos. We have father to talk about, who must now be in the Hellespont. Biote did not reply, and Rhesos asked how many hours of sailing there were between Aulis and the plains of Troy. She answered that it depended upon the wind, and this simple answer perplexed her sons. But the question how they were to go to Athens had to be decided, and to rouse his mother Rhesos spoke of a little wind that had sprung up at dawn. But you were in your beds at dawn ! No, mother, we were on the wharf, said Thrasilos. Father would have been disappointed, Rhesos added, if he had not found somebody to bid him good-bye, and we were not more than three hours out of the house. Three hours on the wharf waiting for the *Calypso* to sail ! she

cried. Father told us the story of the pyramid and the hoard in the body of the Sphinx, Rhesos answered, with the intention of soothing her, and with the same intention Thrasilos said : The story did not come to an end till the captain called from the *Calypso* that they were about to loose. We would have liked father to tell us another story, but the sail was set—— And the captain would not lower it, Biote interjected. Father might have sailed in another ship, Thrasilos continued. We begged him to take us with him—— But you knew your father would remain away for two or three years. Now I am beginning to understand ! You planned to meet your father on the wharf not to bid him good-bye but to persuade him to take you away, leaving me to spend my life in Aulis without husband or sons. Not so, mother ; we tried to detain him ! But as if she had not heard Rhesos, she continued her outcry.

Biote, I beg of thee not to speak words that will poison their memory of these last days, said Otanes. Poison it is for me to hear that my sons escaped from this house to plan their departure with their father ! and walking up and down, restless as a caged panther, she asked Otanes if her sons had had any thought for her when they proposed to leave Aulis with their father. Without waiting for his answer she continued striding along and across the hall, stopping at a table or a pillar to fling from her the imaginations of what her life would be in Aulis robbed of her husband and her children year after year, waiting for the day when it would be their pleasure to return, if they ever returned. I beg thee to lower thy voice, Biote ; the servants will hear thee. But without heeding her father she continued : They have not even brought back a message from Kebren saying how long he will be away. Biote, I beseech thee to believe Thrasilos ; he confesses to having asked his father to take them away, but he did not consider his words any more than thou art considering thine. I am considering my words, she replied, and I am not ashamed of them—— Biote, I beg thee to listen. Father, I will not have thee deny me the right to

speak my mind in my own house, and I will not have Rhesos and Thrasilos try to deceive me with a story about Egypt and the pyramids. They left the house last night without my knowledge to meet their father, who hath gone to the Euxine keeping the secret of his return from me, to whom he owes everything : home, children, fortune. He came here without a drachma in his pocket— ‘Come, Thrasilos, we will leave thy mother and brother to their quarrel. . . . If thou’lt listen, mother, Rhesos said ; we did not go to the wharf to plan against thee, I swear true assurances that were answered by the crash of a statuette against the wall. To contend was impossible, yet he must say something, and picking up a piece of the statuette he said : A poor specimen of the work done at Tanagra ; I always disliked it and am glad it is broken—words that again raised up Biote’s temper. Thou hast no thought for me, Rhesos, only for marble. The statuette is of clay, mother ; and thinking that marble was more trustworthy than his mother’s temper, he left the hall, with “The Golden Fell” in his mind as a residence for the next three or four days. But were he to go to “The Golden Fell” all Aulis would know of the quarrel, and his thoughts began to shape themselves into a letter to his mother. His letter remained unanswered, and he began to feel that if she persisted in her injustice he might come to hate her. Would she have us renounce our callings ? And if we did, would she be satisfied ?

He knew his mother too well to believe that she would, and he waited for three days in the hope of a change in her humour ; but on going to her room to bid her good-bye he heard a tone of grief in her voice, and when he opened the door her face told him that she had suffered in the last three days as much as he had. A careless word, and the wound will open again, he said to himself ; better to say only : Mother, we must not part in anger. At these words she rose and would have thrown herself into his arms if Timotheus had not come to ask Rhesos if he had any instructions to give

about Ajax. The interruption relieved the strain, and Rhesos was able to beg his mother to look after Ajax in his absence. He is as tame as a dog, he said, and far more affectionate, and he'll recognise thee as a relation of his master. Let us go together to visit him. We shall find him lolling up and down the paddock in front of his den, and when thou callest : Ajax ! back will go his ears, for he loves his name. . . . We think all animals live in ignorance, he said, as they walked down the valley, but they have their own knowledge. And so have birds, replied Biote, and she began to tell a story of a flock of geese that had just waddled past, saying : One gander to three geese is the allowance. The gander will tread all three, but he fertilises nearly all the eggs of the one he loves best, eight out of ten, and of the others not more than four. In the flock that hath just gone by there are three little families of four and five and eight goslings, and each family follows the goose that hatched it. But they know the gander quite well ; he helps to keep them out of the woods, where they would be picked up by foxes and wolves, and always leads them back at nightfall. But one night no blandishments, no sticks, could persuade the gander into the pen with the other geese. At last the attempt was relinquished, and in the morning, what dost thou think ? He was found sitting by his beloved goose with all the little goslings about them. Now, the gander had known the goslings would be hatched that night, and no food or fear of sticks could persuade him away from her. He wished to see his goslings come out of their shells, perhaps to help them out when he heard them pecking inside. . . . The Gods had much to think of when they created the world, said Rhesos.

Biote pondered on her son's face as he spoke. Thou hast been thinking deeply of things beside thy sculpture, Rhesos. Yes, mother, and listening perforce to father and grandfather, who often talk of the seers of Babylon, adding a bit to their talk. But here we are. Biote asked him why he spoke in an undertone, and he answered that if he raised his voice

Ajax, who was doubtless in his den asleep, would awaken. And I'd have him see thee first. To rush out upon me? Rushing out is only his play, mother; there is no danger. But, Rhesos, thou wouldest not have me go in alone! And then from vanity or to prove her courage to him, she said: I will go in alone since thou tellst me I shall not be torn or bitten or roughly treated. Rhesos raised his voice, and the wolf with ears erect came forth to see his master. Rhesos cried to him two or three times, and every time Ajax stopped and laid back his ears. The animal's delight was plain, and encouraged by it Rhesos opened the door and let his mother into the garden. The wolf rushed forward and Biote screamed, but Ajax gained some knowledge of his visitor even as he raced, and raising himself on his hind-legs he put his paws round Biote's neck and licked her sweetly. He is asking thee to plead with me that he shall be taken for a walk, and that if I have not time to take him, thou wilt. But he looks doubtfully at his chain and his collar, thinking that it would be pleasanter to romp in front of us and return when he hears his name. Ajax! And at the sound of his name the wolf relinquished Biote to fondle his master. Now, promise me, mother, that thou'l never be afraid of him again, that thou'l feed him every morning and come to see him sometimes. The days will seem long, and the nights, too, if he have no visitors. I promise thee he shall want for nothing, she answered, and the three walked together up the sunlit valley, Ajax giving some little trouble in his anxiety to escape into the woods. He tussled a little, and once or twice Rhesos thought the animal would overpower him, but in the end Ajax preferred good behaviour to liberty and returned with them, seemingly satisfied, to his paddock, where Thrasilos met them, saying that the horses that were to take them to Athens waited in the laneway.

Good-bye, mother. We shall see thee again soon. From Athens to Aulis is but a day's ride.

CHAPTER XI

As she ran into the house burdened with tears and grief she stopped to speak with Otanes. We must try to bear with each other, Biote, and with indulgence for each other's faults and failings the time will pass smoothly till Kebren returns. But before we part for the day's business I would warn thee not to trust thyself to the humours of a wild beast, for though apparently tame, even docile, there lingers always a remembrance of the original forest. Very faint are his memories, if he have any, she answered, and she looked forward to bringing Ajax his breakfast on the morrow, saying to herself : Smiles and a cheerful voice will deceive him ; he'll think that his master cannot be far away ; and the accustomed hand, she added, will be forgotten in the glut of food I shall bring him. All the same, the wolf's onset was not a little terrifying, so swiftly did he rush from his den to drive off the intruder ; but recognising her as a friend of Rhesos, anger vanished from his eyes, and standing on his hind-legs he wooed her, his paws about her shoulders. Lovely indeed are his teeth, and Rhesos was right when he said that his jaws are masterpieces of sculpture ! She watched him gobble, lifting his eyes now and again, afraid lest she should leave him ; and then on a sudden thought that it would be wise to keep some of the good things for a meal later, he carried large pieces into his den, hid them, and came back to sniff the basket over and to beg her to take him for a run. Thou hast in mind our long walk down the valley, Ajax, but I cannot take thee ; thou'rt too strong for me ; and the scent of a wandering bitch might turn thee upon me. The wolf put his paws on her shoulders, begging for another hug. If Rhesos were here thou wouldest leave me for him, for a memory still lingers in thee of the days when he suckled thee on a rag dipped in milk. So did he win thy love, and it is plain that once thy love is given it is given for ever. Art sorry for me, a poor makeshift mother,

with only a share in thee, the right to feed thee, to talk to thee of thy master ?

In every succeeding colloquy she confided a little more of her troubles to Ajax, telling him that ships arrived in the port from Athens, but not one brought a letter or a message from Rhesos, who was forgetful of them both in the delight of shaping images. He heeds not the hours nor the days nor the weeks ; we are forgotten Ajax. The wolf howled, and enjoying his sorrow (a sweet mixture it was with her own), she said : Now, dear friend, 'll tell thee a secret : I suffer as much as thou. I love him better than Kebren, than Otanes, better than Thrasilos Ah, here is Timotheus ! and feeling that something must have happened to bring him to her, she ran to the gate and learnt that Thrasilos had arrived from Athens, charged by Rhesos to return with Ajax. To return with Ajax ! she repeated. Does he think me unworthy of the charge ? The wolf looked up at her, asking with his eyes if his master were back. No, darling, he is not here, but Thrasilos hath come . . . ah, I cannot tell thee, yet I must : Rhesos would have thee in Athens. But he must come to fetch thee himself, which he will not do. And opening the gate she passed out, leaving Ajax to whine for a moment and then to retire to his den to dig up the bones he had buried.

So full was she of Rhesos's cruel request for Ajax, not at some time but at once, that she could barely kiss Thrasilos. One little peck, and protestations flowed over her lips. No, Thrasilos, I cannot give up Ajax. We are friends. He is all I have now. Tell Rhesos that Ajax belongs to him. I do not deny it, but if he wants his wolf he must come to fetch him. To nobody else will I give him. But, mother—— I can talk of the matter no longer. When dost thou return ? I came by ship, said Thrasilos, thinking to take Ajax back with me, but since I am to leave him behind I had better return to-day. A ship will loose this evening. Thou 'lt come to see thy grandfather, she replied, and we 'll have a meal together and thou 'lt

tell me about Rhesos, what he is doing and what thou art doing, and the time will pass pleasantly. And Thrasillo斯 having nothing to say against her projects, accompanied her to Otanes, and it was not till the day began to darken that they walked down to the wharf. I must go, mother, I must. Rhesos will be waiting for me at the Piræus. Rhesos is not everybody, she answered, but her words misgave her. Hear the crier, mother ; I must go on board. . . . Something hath fallen out in the town, he called to her from the gangway. The people are shouting to each other. But pressed by a favourable wind the ship was already gliding from the wharf, and Biote returned wondering what had happened in Aulis to send people running hither and thither. For what end ? she asked herself, and stopping by the laneway and choosing a passer-by whom she deemed likely to inform her, she asked him the cause of the commotion.

Cause there is enough for all men to open their ears and their eyes, he answered. Daridœus, the great seer, is in Aulis, lady ; and she listened first to one and then to another, everybody wishing to tell the story. At last she understood that Daridœus had returned to Greece to discourse to his own people on that wisdom which inspires kindness of heart, the real aim of life, leaving the rites and observances to tradition, and she would have liked to hear more on this subject ; but one of the crowd raised his voice, saying : Thou hast not yet told the lady that Daridœus left Olympia to visit the oracle of Trophonios. I haven't yet come to that part of the story ! he was answered. And whilst the townsfolk wrangled a man took Biote aside, and she learnt from him that on entering the temple of Trophonios at Lebadea, Daridœus had said : I have in mind to go down into the sacred cave. His very words I am reporting, lady ; but the priests were unwilling that a stranger should examine their cave, and reminded Daridœus that only the wicked and impure came to consult the oracle. The people waited for Daridœus to answer the priests, but as if he had not heard them he took

his seat beneath the springs of Hercyne and talked of the rise of the oracle and of the manner of consulting it. Biote asked if the oracle was on a hill or in the plain, and a voice told her that it was on a hil within an enclosure of white stones, and that towards evening Daridœus had wrapped himself in his cloak and descended into the cave ; and after wandering therein for seven days, saving himself from the reptiles by throwing them cakes made of honey, he appeared in Aulis. Had he come by ship, said Biote, I should have heard of it on the wharf, and had he come overland a message would have reached me ; but coming from underground through cracks in mother earth— Behold, he comes And the sight of a tall, thin man in white linen garments very handsome, his hair falling over his shoulders in curls coming up the street at the head of his disciples, imposed silence for a moment ; and then a mutter began in the crowd that had gathered round Biote, and though she was not in the front rank Daridœus picked her out, and addressing her said that he was on his way to the wharves to take ship. The shipper is Otanes, she replied ; I am his daughter and will lead thee to him. And promising the crowd that Daridœus would speak to them when Otanes had arranged what ship he should sail in, she led the seer and his disciples down the laneway, and Timotheus coming to meet them she bade him carry the news to Otanes that Daridœus, the great wanderer and philosopher, had come to Aulis and desired speech with him. Thou'lt enter our house ? she said, turning to Daridœus, and including with a gesture his disciples, she led them into the hall and bade them be seated, adding : Otanes will not keep a philosopher waiting long. He is himself a philosopher, or shall I say one that is prone to philosophy. We shall enjoy each other's company the more, replied the seer, there being always a bond of amity between the wise. We have come a long way, he continued, myself the longest, though it is hard to judge distances in the darkness of caverns. Thou hast heard of my journey, lady ? I heard it from the towns-

folk, she answered, but they speak without authority. Then I will tell it ; but he had only half finished telling of the priests' disgraceful behaviour and of the Gods' displeasure, when Otanes came into the hall breathless, eager to tell Daridœus that if he had known of his arrival in Aulis he would have sent messengers to meet him.

Thy renown, illustrious seer, hath preceded thee, my ships bringing stories of great and stirring events prophesied by thee, of miracles achieved. Wisdom and philosophy, Otanes, descend from the skies, sweet balm, gifts from the Gods lest men should abandon themsclves to the belief that all is riot and confusion on earth. And having given thy life to wisdom and philosophy, Daridœus, thou canst indeed lay claim to communion with the Gods. But thou, Otanes, hast claim to philosophy. To some small part, mayhap, Otanes replied ; none can claim much more. Had I been free, philosophy would have been my life's business. Philosophy asks of a man his whole life, said Daridœus, and feeling this to be so after my father's death I let my brother take my share of the money to do with as he pleased, retaining only sufficient for me to seek philosophy all over the inhabited earth. Philosophy is not confined to one race, nor one people, nor one country ; philosophy is the gift of the Gods to man, and whosoever hath learnt this much hath learnt that he must worship the Gods with his body as well as with his mind. And by dressing myself in linen, the simple produce of the earth and water, letting my hair grow, and refusing all animal food, I have cleansed my mind of many impurities and taken in many new provinces of the soul unknown to it before, including even foreknowledge of what is to be. Otanes bent his head, and laying his face in his hands he drew the seer's attention to him. What is it that distresses thee, Otanes ? That I should have lived so long without knowing thee, Otanes answered. My grandsons are in Athens learning to build temples and to carve statues, and my son-in-law is in the Euxine seeking new routes for trade. The house is large

enough—wilt extend thy visit from a day to a week, from a week to a month, for as long as it pleases thee? Thy house is a worldly possession, Otanes, not comportable with my condition of life, and for this reason I prefer to live with some private individual whose fortune doth not exceed my own. But it is my business to offer my mind to all that need it, and providence and the Gods having directed me hither, my conversation is at thy service for this day at least. Of what we shall speak, whether of my travels or of the teaching of Pythagoras, I cannot say; nayhap I shall be prompted to speak on some other subject, which I am not yet conscious, for good talk is an inspiration of the moment— Daridœus's smooth periods stopped suddenly, checked by the savoury odour of a leg of mutton, and Otanes, guessing the misadventure, ordered the slaves to take it away at once and to replace the course with eggs cooked in many different ways. Until the hen hath been trodden by the cock, said Daridœus, the eggs she lays are without life and may be accepted as food; and he continued in this strain, seeing dried figs and grapes substituted for the different meats, and it was whilst crushing almonds under his teeth that he said that the weariness of travel and constant change were worth while for the pleasure of returning to one's own country. The rugged, hollow coasts of Eubœa have given me more pleasure than the cataracts of the Nile or the hanging gardens of Babylon, or the Ganges and Euphrates, and dearer even than the dear, rugged face of Greece is the pleasure of hearing and speaking our own language. Wherefore we may conclude that our Boeotian accent doth not jar thine ears, said Biote; yet our Athenian neighbours laugh at it. Only in their comedies, Daridœus replied. The Boeotians are not less Greek than the Athenians, and Pindar, though the greatest, is not your only poet. I visited his house in Thebes a few weeks ago and shall not forget easily the reverential hour I spent in the garden recalling immemorial passages from the odes he wrote under its single hawthorn-tree. Wilt repeat them to us in the

courtyard ? Otanes asked, in the tone of one bent double before his illustrious guest. As much of them as I can recall, Daridœus answered. But memory is rarely staunch and often treacherous ; should mine halt, leaving me seeking a word or line, thou wilt remember that I have returned but lately from countries in which the name of Pindar is unknown.

As they moved across the courtyard screams were heard. Is there nobody to stop that woman's mouth ? Otanes cried, and he rang the gong impatiently, saying to Daridœus : I am ringing for Timotheus, my head servant, and will give him such orders as will secure us against further interruptions. And they waited for Timotheus, who came bustling into the hall announcing that the screamer was not a woman but Bardanes, a eunuch. A eunuch ? Daridœus repeated, and always anxious to be instructed in the changes that trading with Oriental peoples had produced in Greece, he inquired if eunuchs had become common in Greece. More common lately than formerly, Otanes replied. The marts are filled with them, and they fetch higher prices than any other type of slave ; our refusal to buy them would ensure their being sold for service in the galleys. Moreover, they make excellent servants. Is not that so, Timotheus ? And Timotheus, acquiescing ruefully that they might sometimes be described as such, assured Otanes that his guest would not be disturbed in his discourse. But, father, cried Biote, we have not heard the cause of Bardanes's screams. To learn it will profit us nothing, Biote, and the telling will delay—— For a few minutes, mayhap, she interjected, but our guest will forgive a woman's curiosity. To make sure of hearing the story she reminded her father that she was mistress of the house, and having with the word mistress established her rule, she turned to Timotheus and bade him tell the cause of Bardanes's screams. I often noticed, he replied, that Bardanes was attached to Daphne—— My own maid ! Biote exclaimed. And I warned him against this attachment, forbidding him to converse with her, to be alone with her, to touch her neck and

hands, and of all, to dress her. But my instructions were disregarded ; one of the female slaves caught him in Daphne's bed, and overjoyed by her discovery she called to her fellows, and all together they pulled him out by the hair, belabouring him with sticks up and down the kitchen.

I regret that a story of a eunuch and a maid-servant should have delayed the recitation of an ode, said Otanes. Even so, father, thy desire of Pindar's ode should not allow thee to question my rule and authority. Mayhap, Biote, but our illustrious guest waits our attention ; he stands by the fountain lost in meditation, doubtless thinking which ode to choose for our delectation. And his words reaching Daridœus's ears, the seer answered that he was considering whether the Eastern world was right in its belief that mutilation guaranteed chastity in slaves. The discovery of a eunuch in a maid-servant's bed seems conclusive that it is not right, he continued, and the need for the eunuch can be explained by the fact that man is idle, always prone to accept conventions as truths. But the truths of yesterday are the falsehoods of to-day ; and his thoughts running on, he compared the continuous enlightening of the human mind during the last centuries to the breaking of day. The hill-tops appear one by one, and as the light strengthens, new frontiers come into view, and we know to-day that love in a man is more than a mere physical want. Wherefore love cannot be extinguished or banished by a mutilation ; love enters by the eyes and ears, and exalted by the imagination abides. But, said Otanes, if no wrong hath been committed upon the youth I see no reason for discontinuing a useful practice. A stinted view this is certainly of man, who is more than mere animal substance, replied Daridœus. Man hath a soul, and mutilation deprives his soul of the enjoyment of virtue, for he can practise chastity no longer when it is enforced by necessity.

Otanes listened with reverence, clinging, however, to the belief that what man had accepted generation after generation

could not be wholly wrong. A profitless discussion had arisen, and he hoped that before they separated for the night the seer would remember his promise to recite passages from Pindar's odes. But Daridœus could not forget that Bardanes's love of Daphne, however balked, vitiated his own doctrine that a eunuch was deprived of the enjoyment of the practice of virtue, and to baffle Otanes, who might at any moment raise up this point against him, he started forth on a relation of his travels in Babylon and Egypt, telling many wonderful stories of his journey down the Nile to the great lakes, of cataracts tumbling from high rocks, of the tribes he had met, of their horses, their spears, their codes of honour and of warfare. He had spoken with many kings and discoursed in assemblies on the soul and virtue, acquiring a rich and flexible vocabulary ; and seduced by the calm, even voice and the pour of language Biote sat exalted, his disciple for an hour, frightened by the encroaching dread that she had neglected her soul these many years, perhaps lost it for ever in husband, in children. He can tell me how I may save my soul, she said to herself, and perplexed by many hauntings that had lain hidden in the depths of her mind and been brought to the surface by this great prophet and seer, bidden perchance by a God to Aulis, she waited for the moment to come when she might speak with him alone. She waited, it seemed, in vain, but at last, when she had almost given up hope, Timotheus came to tell Otanes that beds could not be found in the house or in the outhouses for all the disciples. There are lodgings to be hired in the town, replied Otanes, and turning to Daridœus he asked permission to withdraw with Timotheus to settle how some measure of hospitality might be conceded to all. My disciples will not grumble, said Daridœus, and being used to sleeping on the bare earth will vouch themselves fortunate if some sheaves of straw be laid for them. Otanes thanked him, and no sooner had he withdrawn than Biote rose to her feet ; approaching the seer with reverence,

she said : I have learnt many things to-night that I did not know, and some that I only suspected. Thou canst help me if thou wilt.

My mission is to listen to the broken-hearted, Daridœus answered, to raise up those that have fallen, to inspire confidence in life and in the Gods, and my ears being open to thee, speak. From under shaggy eyebrows his eyes looked into hers. Thou art afraid lest the path thou art treading should stop suddenly and should leave thee looking round for it, and finding it nowhere thy love will appear as a vain thing, lived vainly. Thou art troubled . . . he paused . . . thou art troubled by the love of— Only of my sons, she interjected ; and her confession having begun she related her story rapidly, for at any moment her father might return. My husband, Kebren, hath left me to voyage in the Euxine—I can tell thee nothing of thy husband. Why not ? she asked, and he answered : The future is not open before me like a book to be read aloud to the passer-by. If I foresee, it is not from any power within myself ; it is from a power beyond me. I am but an instrument. Continue thy story, or better still, I will continue it as far as I know it. Thy love is not shared equally between thy sons ? When I take Rhesos in my arms, she answered, I am thrilled, and ask myself if my love of him does not exceed a love legitimate in a mother. The world is love, he replied, but every love is different, as thou'lt understand when I speak of a mother's love for her daughter, which is not and cannot be the same as her love for her son. I would act righteously, Daridœus, and now that I have heard thee tell that love enters by the eyes and by the ears, and that our imagination carries us whither we know not, beyond our control, I would protect myself against evil thoughts ; I am thinking that there may be an amulet or charm that would help me. If thou hast a clear apprehension of my doctrine, Biote, thou must have learnt that there are two worlds, the world within and the world without, and that it is the soul only that matters. Love thy son as nature

commands thee to love him, passionately and with pride, and he will love thee with tenderness and solicitude. All his love is absorbed by marble, she replied : I have often feared that his heart is as marble.

At that moment Biote was swept out of the seer's eyes, and Otanes's house with her, and seeing and hearing the noise of towns wrecked and a rumbling of earth and a change of landscape, he cried : Houses are falling, and in holes and corners men and women pray that the Gods may not command the earth to open and swallow them alive—manifestations of a God's anger for dissensions among men. Not for the first time have cities in Asia been wrecked for such reasons. In the coasts before my eyes the Gods are not worshipped ; they have no place in the thoughts of men. There are no temples, nor shrines ; a godless people. Aulis hath no temple—Aulis will have a temple when my grandsons return from Athens to build it ! cried Otanes, entering the courtyard, followed by Timotheus. Aulis hath delayed long, the seer continued, and may be visited with overturnings and sudden and unforeseen abysses. To-morrow I leave you for the Hellespont if a ship looses. The *Golden Arrow* looses at day-break, said Timotheus. A few hours of rest I will take, and my disciples will find lodgings in the town. I have found lodgings, said Timothicus, but not for all ; sheaves of straw in the outhouses— My disciples do not sleep under silken quilts, and will be shy of a sheaf apiece.

CHAPTER XII

BUT Otanes was not sure that Daridœus had seen what he professed to see, more than once mentioning that in dreams we see distinctly, to which Biote answered : The seer was talking with me of Rhesos and Thrasilos when the vision interrupted him, awake as thou and I are at this moment. But vex not thyself with doubts, father, for a few hours more

or a few days will bring us news whether the towns are whole or in ruins. Yes, Biote, we shall know the truth in a few days more. Our ships should have brought the news sooner. There are seaquakes as well as earthquakes, she answered, and the ships may have split

Ships had indeed split, but some had escaped the swelling of the tides, and the news from the Hellespont proved that Daridœus had prophesied truly. Towns had been wrecked by earthquakes and people were hiding in holes and corners just as he had described them, promising the Gods that if they would avert further thunderbolts temples would be built in their honour, sacrifices offered up and libations poured. Others held that the earthquakes were not the vengeance of the Gods upon men who had not built temples and worshipped them, but were caused by disputes among the Gods themselves. Hephaestus, they said, was forging thunderbolts to be used against Ares for his seduction of Aphrodite ; whilst Chaldean magicians, drawn into the region of the wrecked towns in the hope that money would be given to them to obtain peace from the Gods, were saying that Poseidon had raised up his empire in great waves to revenge the flight of Aphrodite, whom he had carried away in his chariot and lived with for how many years was not known. But the people were too frightened to hearken to the story of Poseidon's love of Aphrodite, and eagerly besought the Chaldeans to take all their store of gold and silver and lodge it in their banks, and in return to offer up sacrifices for the quieting of earth tremors.

Biote sat enjoying her triumph, without pity for her father, who had come from his counting-house with the news thinking to please her, unsuspecting that she would treat him as an old fool. When she had played with him a little while she put out her paw with the words : Well, father, it is very extraordinary ? Very, he answered somewhat dryly. I know not how it is that thou shouldst ever have doubted the vision, she continued ; his sudden vision, hadst thou been present at it, would have convinced thee as it convinced me. She had

had her triumph and wished reconciliation, but could not resist the temptation to humiliate him a little further. What I fail to understand, she said, is all these days of doubt despite the stories that are now known about him and that must have reached thine ears. The marvellous is part of himself. He is not as we are ; he hath faculties that we have not. Stories that are reported in the town have reached my ears truly, replied Otanes, but stories spread by disciples should be accepted cautiously. Many times, father, hath he predicted the deaths of tyrants, and droughts and diseases, and he hath subdued plagues. But, I repeat, if thou hadst been present when the sight of the wrecked towns broke upon him— Well, well, Biote, we cannot all be as wise as thou ! Biote bristled, and he added : We need not quarrel. The business before us should be enough to engage our thoughts, she replied. We have to make provision against an outbreak of earthquakes along our own coasts, and at once. And how dost thou propose to do that, Biote ? By conforming to the counsels of Daridœus, she answered. Hast forgotten that he said the earthquakes were inflicted by the Gods in the regions of the Hellespont as a punishment for lack of worship ? He added that the Gods rejoice in temples raised in their honour, embellished with statues of their beauty, and reproved us for not raising temples and carving statues, saying that in our prosperity we had forgotten we are subject to Olympus. Thou hast Daridœus's words closely at heart, daughter. Wherefore, said Biote, we should build a temple and place in it a statue of exceeding beauty. After reflection Otanes answered : The people of Aulis must be consulted ; an assembly must be called at once— Now we are beginning to understand each other, father ! But to call an assembly there must be a head, Otanes continued, and I am too old to undertake new work. Were Kebren here he would be elected priest and guardian of the temple. I never knew why he left us, father ; there was no quarrel. Is his absence a riddle to thee as it is to me ? she asked, and picking Otanes's rug from

the floor she arranged it about him whilst wondering at his thinness ; his yellow, claw-like hand she laid upon it, and Otanes turned his head that he might better see his daughter.

I have often thought, Biote, that the rhapsodist we believed to be dead in Kebren all these years was not dead but sleeping. and awoke when he returned from a great disappointment in trade to learn that his sons were going to build temples and carve statues all over the Greek world ; and it may be that this journey to the Euxine is Kebren's revolt against himself I can imagine him saying as he rode from Athens : I may find auditors in the Propontis and in the Greek towns along the shores of the Euxine. Yes, Biote, in my thoughts he is now expounding in Sinope and Nicomedia and other towns the same ideas that we heard in our courtyard. And thou thinkest, father, that if he continue to find auditors he will never return ? To get my husband back I must wish that he again misses his bourne! Not so, Biote ; if he should gain audiences and applause he will be anxious to return to win thy love with the story of his triumphs. Were he to return and take me in his arms, saying : I have failed as a rhapsodist, I would console him with my love and with stories of his children. Biote, thou dost expect too much. A man's ideas are dearer to him than wife or children, for they are his soul, and no man will confess his soul to be base and worthless, not even to himself. A pretty story thou hast invented, father, to reconcile me to my husband, who may, like Ulysses, have tarried on an enchanted island, where months go by cooing for the unloosing of a girdle. Kebren is a chaste man, Otanes replied, and his thoughts stray seldom, if ever, to sandals or girdles. Of what art thou thinking, Biote ? My thoughts have turned backward, she answered, and I think thou hast discovered the truth. Kebren is a chaste man. He never saw me out of my shift, and I was a pretty little body. I beg thee, daughter, to have patience. Have patience, father ? The Gods have no patience with us, and Hephaestus and Poseidon may be planning punishments,

singly or together, against a town that hath never built a temple in their honour. I have never heard of a temple built in Hephaestus's honour, said Otanes. O, father, it matters not to which God ; we must have a temple, and it would seem that we cannot have one till Kebren returns. Wherefore let a ship be sent to search for him. The Euxine is a great place, daughter, and a ship may search for years without finding him. I can say no more. Biote rearranged the pillow behind Otanes's head and waited till he recovered himself. Not another word shall be spoken about this, she said to herself, till he raises the question again. And many evenings went by before the time came for her to speak once more of what was nearest her heart : the building of the temple—and this time she could have spoken of it without argument, for the news brought by a ship from the Hellespont was good news. The sacrifices that Daridœus had offered up and the libations he had poured had appeased the God, Poseidon or Hephaestus, they knew not which. Nor did it matter ; the earth no longer quaked and the people were rebuilding their ruined homes. But the silence that Biote had imposed upon herself she kept ; the temple was not mentioned ; and their evening talk was difficult to maintain, for little else was in her mind.

Otanes, not so resolute as she, tried to soothe her with praise of Daridœus's art in appeasing the God, who had accepted a few sacrifices and libations, but whilst speaking these words of comfort he indulged himself in the hope that the silence of the earth had postponed the necessity of gaining peace in his home by sending a ship on a vain quest to the Euxine in search of Kebren. A few months more they would have to wait, and as the earth had ceased to quake these did not matter. The Gods have patience, more than Biote, he said to himself, smiling out of his ragged beard. And then speaking out of his sympathy for his daughter, whom he guessed to be possessed of a secret terror lest the earthquakes that had ceased in the Hellespont might erupt along the Euripos, he advised a letter to Rhesos and Thrasilos asking

them to ride over from Athens, mentioning that a temple and a statue were needed at Aulis. Thou mayst indite my very words, Biote ; and to make their coming doubly sure it might be as well to add that thou wilt walk a little way out of Aulis to meet them, or further if the day should prove agreeable for walking and thy limbs be eager for another quarter of a league. She replied that story-telling was not easy whilst walking between two horses. They will dismount he said. Thereby making the story more difficult than if they remained in the saddle ! At thy mind hath it, daughter, so let it be. And it was in the courtyard that the sculptor and architect heard of Darideus' vision and prophecies.

Grouped under the statue of Hermes they listened with an attention that raised hopes in their elders that the site of the temple would be decided during the course of an afternoon's walk, and the whole story was not told when teams of oxen walked in Biote's imagination, bringing huge cut stones to foundations already dug. In a year from now, began Rhesos, we—— A year, cried Biote, with earthquakes ready to spring upon us at any moment ! We cannot leave Athens now, mother ; our work on the Parthenon will last for many months. And to quiet his mother's alarms Rhesos added : Thou'rt always in a hurry, mother, and what is done in a hurry is done badly. No more than the ride hither did Phidias allow us ; we are due in Athens to-morrow. But the name of Phidias fell on deaf ears, and Biote saw them ride away, resolved that she would not allow herself to be defrauded of her right to save Aulis, her sons' lives and fortunes, her father's ; her husband had taken himself off to the Euxine. Her face darkened, and lightened again as she bethought herself how the townsfolk might be roused out of their indifference with stories of hills crumbling and the sea rising up in the strait and overwhelming Aulis. But of what use to choose a site if thy sons are kept in Athens by Phidias ? they asked ; and to Biote herself it mattered little though Aulis were wrecked if Thrasilos was not the builder of the

temple and Rhesos the carver of the statue. Daridœus was in her mind always ; she copied his address, his lofty phrases ; but as the earth remained still and news came that the towns that had been shaken were now rebuilt, the towns-folk of Aulis began to answer her warnings with quiet smiles, and as her meetings dwindled she heard jeers in her imagination and fancied she was avoided and laughed at in secret, a terrible thought. Wherefore she clenched her teeth, encouraged now and again by an adherent, a convert to her ideas, but never listened to seriously, till the news came from the Hellespont that the towns that had been wrecked and rebuilt were being wrecked again by new earth quakings. Then indeed opinion changed, and she became a heroine in place of an almost bel dame.

Her triumph was at its height when Kebren returned from the Euxine, expecting to see Aulis in ruins. But Aulis stood as he had left it, and he shaped his inquiries to the harbour master cautiously. Aulis is fortunate, he said. All the way up the Euripos I foresaw ruins, yet every roof is intact. We have escaped earthquakes, the harbour master answered, but there has been much talk about them, thy wife, Kebren, foremost among the talkers. There's always some that will hearken to any tale, whatever it may be. Those who have seen the wrecked towns along the Hellespont do not smile over stories of earthquakes, Kebren replied. I have come from Colchis, where I met Daridœus, the seer, and he bade me hasten homeward to offer sacrifices and libations to the Gods. Thy wife hath preached the building of temples and the carving of statues, said the harbour master, and Kebren asked to which God or Goddess. The harbour master could not tell him, and he turned into the laneway leading to his house, stopping to listen for a moment to the cooing in the dove-cote above the gateway, where Biote met him, saying : Thou hast returned to us at last, and not too soon. Not too soon, he repeated, for I bring news from Daridœus, whom I met in Colchis. And when he had told the story fully of his

meeting with Daridœus and of his voyage home, he said : I will ask thee, Biote, to send a messenger to Athens with the news, one who will bring our sons home to-morrow. I must hasten to the counting-house to write a proclamation calling all the citizens of Aulis together to hear how two cities in the Hellespont were destroyed by earthquakes, and how their own town may be saved from a like calamity by the building of a temple and libations and sacrifices. If I am but lucky enough to find the scriveners in the counting-house ! he said to himself, as he walked with rapid steps. That luck was not denied him, and the words coming to him almost without his being aware of them, he dictated a proclamation in which the citizens read that if the anger of the Gods was not allayed, and if an earthquake should be raised up under the sea or in the hills along the coast, the town would perish and all the shipping. Wherefore Kebren, the messenger of Daridœus to Aulis, had summoned a meeting, and all those who had the welfare of Aulis at heart were invited to attend to consider the site for a temple and the deity that should be enshrined.

CHAPTER XIII

EVER since the posting of the warning crowds had lingered to read it and to discuss it, and when on the appointed day Kebren appeared he was received with acclamations and cheers, a maiden presenting him with a laurel wreath. An honour that was denied to me in Dioscurias, he said ; the sweetest flowers are those that bloom in our own gardens ; and full of confidence he mounted the platform that had been raised for his convenience.

Fellow-citizens, you have read in the proclamation of the danger that Aulis stands in, which can be averted only by the building of a temple ; wherefore I put the question to you : Will you have a temple ? We will have a temple ! and so unanimous was the shout that Kebren was thrilled, and

division did not break forth until he asked : To which deity shall we build ? Many were for Poseidon, and as many for Aphrodite, to say nothing of isolated voices eager to speak but without anything but words to offer, and soon a third party began to emerge, a party that was of opinion that it would be well to choose some other deity, Poseidon having quarrelled with Aphrodite, who left his kingdom under the sea to gather worshippers around her on earth. But, said Kebren in his efforts to find peace, let us not enter into the question of whether Aphrodite's flight from Poseidon was justified. I will merely ask you to remember that the quarrel occurred long ago—— No, sir, interjected a tall, lean man, a butcher, the Gods are timeless ; a quarrel among the Gods is for eternity. Whereupon Thyonicus, a cobbler and a poet, cried: Thy conception of immortality, Cos, is as meagre as thy beef-steaks ! As many wished to know whether the Gods were timeless and quarrelled for eternity, a wrangle began, and Kebren roared many times before he obtained a sufficient silence to propose that the Gods should be allowed to settle their own differences, and that the citizens of Aulis should choose some twenty or thirty men to form a deputation to meet Otanes in his house. To carry his point he added : It would be well that the matter should be discussed with Otanes, and the crowd apprehending this to mean that Otanes would pay for the temple, agreed willingly. And that there should be no unfairness Kebren proposed that the deputation should be elected by vote. Everybody that hath a house shall vote, he said. The hearth is the centre of life ; let the hearth decide. And it was the hearth that did decide. Thirty citizens of many varied trades and wits assembled in Otanes's hall to settle the questions at issue.

Otanes begged me to excuse his absence from the meeting, said Kebren. He is old, and discussion fatigues him unduly. Wherefore he hath charged me to ask Milon to give us his reasons for wishing Aulis to be placed under the protection of Poseidon ; and when we have been favoured with our fish-

monger's views I will ask Thyonicus, our cobbler-poet, to tell us his reasons for wishing to place the town under the protection of Aphrodite. . . . Milon began by reminding them that Poseidon had always shown himself favourable to Aulis. We have been told that the Gods are timeless and that their quarrels are for eternity, but I would not raise that question—— But thou hast raised it! cried Thyonicus, and he was answered by Kebren: Wait for thy turn to speak; do not interrupt him who hath the ear of the assembly. It will be remembered, said Milon, that it was Poseidon who obtained Æolus's promise that not a wind should escape from the bladder of winds whilst the ships journeyed to Troy. Thyonicus muttered, but catching Kebren's eyes at that moment, he refrained from challenging this statement, and Milon continued to tell with increasing confidence that winds escaped sometimes even from the best-secured bladder, but the fleet had arrived at Troy almost intact, and ever since—that is to say, since Troy fell four hundred years ago—commerce had arisen and prospered on the shores of the Euripos. Certainly Aulis hath been favoured in her rivalry with the merchants of Salamis, he said, who, if they had succeeded in robbing us, would have made an end of the town, all the trade of the Ægean and the Euxine falling into their hands. But the effect of trade passing from one port to another can be understood only by men of imagination. It is the lot of man to think more of to-day than of to-morrow, and before our wharves were empty of shipping we should be cut off from all supplies from the sea—— Cut off from all supplies from the sea, and the galleys lying empty in the strait! cried Thyonicus. Art thinking, Milon, that in times of famine wheat will not reach us from over seas? I was thinking, Milon answered, not of the wheat that might or might not reach us from Egypt, but of the tunny that our nets would not draw out of the Maeotic lake if Poseidon should call up a tempest, driving our fishing-boats hither and thither, restoring to the sea the captures of our fishermen. This he may do if a

temple be not built in his honour on the seashore, and with still more certainty will he avenge the building of a temple to Aphrodite, who wearied of his palaces and left him. And what wouldest thou do, Thyonicus asked, if the fishers of Aulis returned without fish for thee to sell ? And if Aphrodite should not get a temple, Milon answered, what wouldest thou do with thy verses ? Doubtless, also, thou dost itch to propound thy plan whereby all the new babes exposed in the woods shall be saved from the wolves ? And guessing what was in the fishmonger's mind, Kebren interposed hastily, saying : We are not here to settle personal quarrels but to determine whether Aulis shall have a temple dedicated to Aphrodite or to Poseidon ; at which Milon muttered that it was not he who was the aggressor but Thyonicus. I will protect thee as far as I can against Thyonicus, whose interruptions delay the meeting, Kebren continued, and thou wilt in return confine thy remarks to the subject. Remember, the question is whether we shall build a temple to a God or to a Goddess. Whichever will afford us the best protection, Milon replied—Poseidon, without doubt. We would hear thy reasons, said Kebren. I would not alarm the meeting, sir, but there are evil reports. Then speak them, Milon ; bad news doth not improve with keeping. No more than fish ! cried Thyonicus. Some fishers have come into the port, said Milon, and they tell of great waves that threatened to engulf their boats, and there being no wind about they judged the waves to arise from the bottom of the sea out of Poseidon's kingdom, and not out of the air, which is Æolus's kingdom. When the waves had passed on they lifted their nets, and finding the fish they had caught were dead they sailed away; but they had not sailed far before a great wave rose, and the sea was shaken as the earth is by an earthquake, and plying their oars, and sailing when the wind was favourable, they returned to our wharves many days after we had expected them. In answer to our questions as to what storms they had met with and why they had returned without fish, they said :

A draught of clean water, and we will tell the strange sights we have witnessed : islands taken by the sea and other islands thrown up by the sea, great sinkings and uprisings under calm skies. We watched dead fish floating to the surface, mermaids and tritons.

Dost believe these stories of islands heaved up by the sea and dragged down by the sea of dying tritons and mermaids floating past amid tunny-fish? Thyonicus asked Kebren. My good Thyonicus, no man knows what he believes! Whereupon Milon was raised above himself, and seeking again with his eyes among the audience he espied the man whom he sought, an old seafarer, who came forward saying: Mine is a story stranger than thy that Milon hath heard from his fishers ; and so far the seafarer's words were truthful, for his story was certainly stranger than that of the drowned mermaids and tritons. A great wave from the bottom of the sea, he said, had split his ship, and all were drowned but he within sight of an island on which tritons and mermaids had taken refuge from their natural element, the sea, and for forty days he lived among these. None can live for forty days without food, somebody cried, and the seafarer answered: The tritons and mermaids did not share with me the fish they caught about the island, but an animal with the docile nature of a dog and large, round eyes, softer than any woman's, came up the rocks and presented me with a fish he had caught. After that he came every day to me with fish, beguiling me at last into the water with him, and together we swam from island to island, getting the fish that we needed sometimes here and sometimes there. My courage often deserted me and I asked myself: Whither goes he? but we swam on together mile after mile, till at last there were no islands within sight and I said: Now I drown ! But my friend helped me to endure some hours longer, and when the coast appeared I said: It is to Greece he hath brought me ! and swimming on with my last strength I reached the shore ; but my friend was nowhere. A cry had rent the air but I was so weary

with swimming that I had not heeded it, and I said : Some great fish hath got him. A voice from the end of the hall cried : A shark must have taken thy friend from thee—a wonderful story indeed ! And this story, too, thou wouldest believe ? Thyonicus asked Kebren, and to appease the cobbler Kebren dissembled, saying : I know not what I believe, Thyonicus, and in this I am the same as thou art ; man, finding no complete truth anywhere, is a weaver of stories—words that were well received by many. Milon's voice rising above the many voices thanked him for the consideration he had given to the stories of the fishers, and of all, to the story of the seafarer that a seal had brought to shore, and when the tumult ceased Kebren said : On now with thine own story, Thyonicus.

I come with no wild tale of the sea, said Thyonicus, of islands raised up by the waters and dragged down by the waters, but with a simple tale that will persuade you without difficulty to give your votes to Aphrodite rather than to Poseidon, who according to my friend Milon is threatening to destroy all ships and drown all mariners. Would he have us believe that Poseidon is no Greek divinity but a cruel God come over from Babylon or Egypt ? Poseidon hath always had a kindly eye for Aulis, and will not be impatient with us if we delay the building of his temple for a week or a month or a year. Being a God he knows all things ; in his sea palaces, perchance, he hath heard my odes to Aphrodite, his heart relenting towards her all the while, and being, as I have said, a kind God, he hath pity for the children that are exposed every year by parents who lack money to buy their daily bread and have no heart to rear children with nothing in front of them but a life more miserable than they themselves have known. Many of our ancient stories tell of male children brought home by shepherds to childless wives, few of rescued girls, and it is for these I plead.

So did Thyonicus speak, and all the crowd about him were agape to hear why he pleaded for the innocent human flesh

of the children of poor parents, and how he would connect their deaths with the temple of Aphrodite. But being a clever pleader Thyonicus waited till the curiosity of the townsfolk was at height before revealing his project for the maintenance of the temple. Among the female children exposed, he said, there would be many who would grow into beautiful girls, and being delicate to Aphrodite would bring the great world to Aulis; and instead of being a small port with but few hetæræ and those of an inferior sort, sufficient for the fishermen but no more, Aulis would soon rival Corinth. Out of human pity Thyonicus raised a vision of great profligacy clearly to be read in the faces of all about him, a profligacy that enraged Kebren till he could bear it no longer; and with an anger that was seldom in him he denounced Thyonicus's pity for abandoned female children as a means of reshaping the blithe Aphrodite to the likeness of her abominable sister, the Persian Goddess Astarte. His indignation waxed, and he asked Thyonicus if he knew that in the temple of Belus every girl on attaining the age of puberty had to sit there till a piece of silver was thrown into her lap, the silver going to the maintenance of the temple and the girl to the pleasure of the man in some secluded dell. Thyonicus shrugged his shoulders saying: Tales from Herodotus! a sneer that Kebren could not let pass without a reproof. One of the greatest of our writers, he answered; wouldst thou stint our knowledge of the world to the hollow, rocky coasts of Eubœa? And to smite through helmet and breastplate, he added: Yesterday, whilst we sought along the plain for a site for the temple, thy pleading was for secluded groves of pines and plane-trees; thy thoughts then were upon the temple of Belus and its priestesses, and no doubt if thou wert alone in this matter our own sweet Erycine would soon be changed to the Astarte of the Assyrians. We were austere and pure till the Persians came, and having chased the Persians out of our country would it not be shameful to bring over their Gods for worship? —words that brought a majority of the deputation over to the

side supported by Kebren, who, quick to take advantage of a revulsion of feeling in his favour, cried : Let us to the vote and discover by a show of hands who is for Aphrodite and who for Poseidon. Many hands were raised, but before Kebren had time to apply himself to the count, Thyonicus intervened, saying : My answer to thee, Kebren, hath not yet been heard. Is it not better that children exposed on the mountain-sides should live for the Goddess than become food for wolves and bears ? I ask, fellow-townsmen, that your votes shall be given to the children. And I ask, said Kebren, that children whom their parents cannot support shall be taken over by the town and taught trades. Thou wouldest impose further taxes on the people ? Thyonicus asked. At the word *taxes* a shudder seemed to pass through the assembly, and Kebren, knowing he had lost many supporters, began his count languidly, which turned out as he expected, an equal number of votes being given to Poscidon and to Aphrodite. Thyonicus called upon Kebren to give the casting vote. It is for Otanes to give the casting vote, Kebren answered, and I will not detain you here any longer. Milon, Thyonicus, myself, and an ancient seaman whose name I have not heard, have spoken ; a vote hath been taken, and the decision remains with Otanes, which is as it should be, since he pays for the temple.

CHAPTER XIV

My management of the people seems to have pleased thee, Biote ; thy face is full of happiness. Biote, taken by surprise, answered demurely that since Otanes was to give the casting vote they had better go to him, but as they rose to their feet Timotheus opened the door. Thou art about early this morning, father. We were on our way to thee. And thou, Thrasilos, whence comest thou ? From a search with Rhesos along the valley-side for a site for the temple, and the news

reaching us that the meeting in the market-place was over, and that a deputation had come hither, I have come to hear if the temple is to be dedicated to Aphrodite or to Poseidon. As many were for God as for Goddess, Kebren answered, and Thyonicus asked me to give the casting vote ; but I said that the casting vote lay with Otanes. If Poseidon had been chosen as tutelar God of Aulis said Thrasillo斯, we might have been compelled to bring a sculptor from Athens to carve his statue ; and on being asked therefore, he replied : Rhesos told me he could do nothing with Poseidon, and I agreed with him that the God would not be a suitable statue for the temple I have in mind. Rhesos coming into the hall at that moment was asked why he was averse from Poseidon, and he answered : Because I have Aphrodite in my mind. But grandfather—hath he heard the story of the assembly ? Grandfather hath only just left his bed, Kebren replied. Then let us hear the story. But I have told it to thy mother, Rhesos, and may not repeat it without wearying her. I can leave if I weary of it, said Biote, but I shall not ; and tell it in the same words, Kebren, for a good story loses none of its goodness in repetition. And Kebren having told the story as nearly as he could in the words he had used before, was reproved by Biote : As an actor of old time and a rhapsodist, thou shouldst have been able to repeat it without loss of accent or intonation.

This morning, Biote, thou'rt cross-grained, Otanes remarked, and wishing his grandsons to make Aulis memorable with their skill, come what might, he averred in no hesitating voice that Thyonicus had raised a question which appealed to him, saying he had always pitied the children exposed on mountain-sides to be devoured by wild beasts, or to be rescued, perchance, by a passing shepherd. Oracles, it is true, have bidden this to be done, he continued, and poverty, perhaps the most potent oracle of all, hath urged parents to abandon their children ; but now an opportunity comes to make an end of a practice of which the Greeks everywhere

begin to be ashamed. Kebren and myself are paying for the temple, but we must make provision for the future, and Thyonicus hath shown us that this can be done. We shall take the children in their early infancies, before they have will to choose, but it may be assumed that they would prefer to live to be priestesses rather than to be devoured by wolves and bears ; and compromise being the essence of wisdom, I propose compromise with thine ideas, Kebren, which I know well. Although younger by many years than I am, thy mind goes back to an earlier period, when Greeks lived austere lives, but as we cannot return to the past I propose that the children we have collected shall be given their choice on attaining the age of puberty whether they shall remain in the temple as priestesses or be sold as slaves. It seems not a little cruel, said Kebren, that after having trained these children in all the rites of Aphrodite—choral dancing, the playing of lyre and lute, the weaving of garlands—we should sell them. We cannot permit them to remain in the temple save as priestesses Otanes replied, and I vow, Kebren, that to trouble thy heart on their account is vain. Perfect justice hath never existed in the world. The scales tilt on one side or the other. But in rescuing these children from wolves and bears we shall be expressing a morality hidden in the hearts of all the Greeks. Let us be the first to express it. In opposing Thyonicus at the meeting, said Kebren, I knew not that Rhesos was not in favour of the Sea-God, and I must thank Thyonicus for his opposition, since to have chosen Poseidon would have left me under the necessity of bringing a sculptor from Athens to carve a statue that comes by right to my son. Thine apology will be welcomed by the poet-cobbler for a while, Otanes answered, and then, perchance, form the subject of a lampoon. Thy task is to make known to the people of Aulis that I have given my casting vote in favour of Aphrodite. The people of Aulis shall know it within an hour, replied Kebren. Come, Biote, and thou too, Rhesos, for thou wilt have something to say that may help us. Thrasilos—— I am concerned with

the site for the temple, father, and grandfather knowing the plain better than we, though we have known it all our lives, I would consider with him if the hill over against the sea hath his approval.

Thou hast known the valley but a dozen years, Thrasilos, said Otanes, for in infancy we see little ; I have known it for seventy years and have thought of it, which is another kind of seeing, and I would tell thee that on the top of yonder hill are ruins of great antiquity, said to be the remnants of a temple to which the worshippers of Chronos came in a dateless time, before history was, to thank the God for the peace of their lives and the enjoyment of the sun. In that far-off time the beauty of the earth was enough for all men, and satisfied with the fruits of cornfield and vineyard, and the milk given to them by numerous flocks and herds, men wandered or lived in tents without knowledge of the skies and the revolt that Zeus was brooding against his father, Chronos. And for why, grandfather, did Zeus rebel against the reign of Chronos, since it was, in thy telling, of exceeding excellence ? Men are not concerned, Thrasilos, with good or evil so much as with their own vanities and ambitions, the bane of godkind as well as of mankind. And the old man's talk drifting into legends come down from immemorial time of the fierce battles that were fought on high between those who stood by Chronos and those who wished for his fall, he said : Ages went by, till the old forsaken God was left with a few followers in the forests, and when these dropped away the God died. But are not the Gods immortal ? Thrasilos asked. We appeal to the Gods in our afflictions and troubles, Otanes answered. and these having seemingly passed over like the clouds, we make mockery of the Gods. Is there no God in which we may believe always, grandfather ? Yes, grandson—Providence ! On looking back everybody believes himself to have been led by the hand. A sad belief, said Thrasilos. Why sad ? Otanes asked, for in it we find escape from our dread that we and all the world are no more than blind chance.

Go on talking, grandfather ; I like to listen, for thou art wise. Not in myself, Otanes answered ; mine is but the wisdom of years. Our minds enlarge like rivers as they approach the sea. Go thou and seek the first requisite of thine art : a site.

The old man's head sank into the cushion of his chair, and Thrasilos waited for the old brown hands, like dead wood, to move ; but they were moveless. At last a snore warned him that Otanes had passed out of waking into sleep. Now to glide out of the room noiseless as a shadow ! he said, which he did ; and coming upon Rhesos in the town he told that grandfather believed only in one God, but had bidden him forth to seek a site for the temple to Aphrodite. Did he speak of the ruins on the hilltop ? Rhesos asked. He did, saying we must respect the Gods that have been. I am with grandfather in this, Thrasilos, for if we do not, who will in time to come respect our Gods, our temples, our statues ? Thrasilos did not answer, and Rhesos was glad to be left to enjoy in silence the light wispy clouds stretching across the skies, reminding him of the manes and tails of the wild horses that were brought from the Lelantian plain to Athens to serve the sculptors as models, and to admire the herons in a patch of tall grasses, without communicating his admiration of the birds to his brother. Nature when she called that bird into being was a sculptor, he said to himself, and when the birds, finding they were watched, rose into the air, he added : Half the beauty of the heron is in his grey-blue plumage ; a painter would be needed to represent him. Every art, he said aloud, still communing with himself, is stinted ; it is always loss and gain, turn and turn about. Of what art thou speaking ? Thrasilos asked, and he received a sharp reprimand from Rhesos. Thou hast no ears for me, Thrasilos ; thine eyes are busy seeking a site. After all, the first requisite of an architect, Thrasilos answered—grandfather's words to me before he fell asleep. But grant me thine attention, Rhesos, whilst we search this plain or valley for a site suitable to our temple. Methinks we are not far from one yonder where the shelving hillside juts

and rises, shaping itself into a knoll. I should like thy temple to be visible from Aulis, Rhesos answered. And it will be, Thrasilos replied ; a few trees felled, and pillared front and architrave will come agreeably into the landscape. A view there should be, said Rhesos, or the knoll rises steeply out of the valley ; but thou mayst not find enough space on the top for the gardens that we associate with a temple dedicate to Aphrodite. Measurement will tell us that, Thrasilos replied ; a rude measurement my stride will give me. And leaving his brother to his thoughts, he paced the swards along and across, tallying on his fingers, returning at last to Rhesos, saying : I think the space will be enough for the temple, and the slope of the ground giving a natural place for steps leading up to the portico, the building will have the height thou desirest. But Rhesos, still immersed in himself, thought that the site was not sufficiently imposing. Because thou art a sculptor, said Thrasilos, thou regardest only the folds of the ground as they now stand. I promise thee that this terraced sward will give the appearance thou hast in mind when it is capped by the portico of the temple. Another advantage of this site, he continued, will be that the path at the edge of the field where the neatherds pass every morning can at very little cost be changed to a road whereby we can bring up marble from the wharves.

Thou, Thrasilos, canst judge a landscape as I judge the model before me, foreseeing what can be done with him or with her. But if our decision is to be mutual we must climb all the hillsides, keeping our knowledge of this site from father and mother, and of all, from the townsfolk, and by wearing a solemn, omniscient air we shall be able in the end to impose our choice upon them. Thou art the architect, accountable for the site and the walls and the portico, for everything except the statue in the cella. But I would have thee consider one thing seemingly overlooked : the dwellings of the priestesses. These will be hidden in the woods of the hillside, replied Thrasilos, and the priestesses will reach the temple by risin

and dipping paths. Thou foreseest the temple in its relation to the headland, Rhesos answered, and they walked to the end of the shallow valley speaking of the choral dances that grandfather had witnessed in his youth, till they came unexpectedly upon a great plane-tree hollowed out by fire, with a pool about its roots. Whither, said Rhesos, the goatherd brings his flock to drink. Sniff the breeze, Thrasilos, and thou'l get the scent of goats, as father did when he journeyed across Attica—— I catch sight of the folk coming up the valley, Rhesos, and since thou art averse from babble, come behind these trees. Their babble concerns us little, Rhesos answered ; it is part of the evening that I would not suppress if I could. All the same, our thoughts about the site we would do well to keep private from them.

Thyonicus, who seemed to be the leader of the company, was of the opinion that there was hardly room enough for a temple on the top of the knoll ; moreover, it was within view of the sea and might excite Poseidon's anger. No site is beyond reproach, Rhesos answered. For days to come we shall walk up and down the valley, considering every hillside, our ears open always to your preferences and objections. We shall meet here often, coming in the end to wise conclusions. The flattered townsfolk murmured approval, and thanking them for their good will the brothers accompanied them towards Aulis. Friends and neighbours stopped to ask Thrasilos when the walls of the temple would begin to appear above ground, and neatherds and shepherds continuing to arrive from the hills and the fields, Rhesos engaged them in discussion regarding Aulis's need of a temple. But just as he was about to tell of the terrible fate of the towns along the Hellespont, a woman cried : My hot-pot is boiling away on the hearth whilst I am listening to jabber about Aphrodite and her temple ! The crowd laughed and dispersed, convinced that the hot-pot was the more important, and the twain were left to reflect on its good sense. Biote's hot-pot awaits us, said Rhesos. All living things have the evening meal in mind

at this hour The swallows are striving after it in their last turbulent flights, the geese are waddling home to the pen after a long day spent in the woods. We would do well to follow the example of the swallows and the geese, replied Thrasilos, and uncertain whe her their grandfather could be persuaded to allow them a sh ipment of Scythians to dig the foundations, they entered th e town, Rhesos saying : He'll find some excuse, for he is int int, I know, on a great piece of business—the building of gall eys to export Mnasaleas's wool up and down the Mediterranean ; and we shall have something to say about these galle slaves when he bids Timotheus light the lamp and asks father to read aloud a book of Homer. Excellent is thy counsel, O R iesos! We must not, however, allow the evening meal to be prolonged unduly ; to bring it to an end we must show restle ssness, silencing our loquacious parents with our silence, shuffling our feet significantly under the table. And not one of these plans having miscarried, Biote rose to her feet and led the way into the courtyard, bidding Timotheus light the lamp.

Thou wouldst hear a book of Homer read, father ? she asked. Now is the time ! Rhesos said to himself. Mother, before father begins to read may I not ask grandfather how many slaves he can afford to give us from the new fleet he is building ? Why not ask him at the end of the reading ? He will be sleepy, Rhesos answered, and without waiting for the reproof which he suspected to be on his mother's lips, he said : Grandfather, if we would escape an earthquake we must build, and build we cannot if we have not slaves to dig the foundations. The cutters should be working in the quarries and the carters bringing enough stone here for the masons to begin laying as soon as the slaves leave the trenches. Plenty of slaves thou shalt have, grandson—— Then our temple is safe, and we are safe ! cried Rhesos, and Thrasilos clapped his hands for admiration of the skill with which his grandfather had been caught as in a snare. May we expect the slaves to-morrow ? he asked. Rhesos interrupted me in the middle

of a sentence, Otanes answered. I was about to say that I need a shipload of stout backs and arms to row the galleys I am building for the exportation of Mnasalcas's wool. Mnasalcas will think he is treated with little consideration if I begin to import slaves to dig the foundations of a temple. Thou speakest, said Biote, as if the news had been kept from thee of earthquakes and the likelihood of one reaching us before long. We have been hoarding all our lives, she continued, and for what end? Plainly not for our children! And being now thoroughly roused, she impugned Otanes's love of his grandsons till, ignoring the cruel thrust, he answered her that only a certain number of slaves could work at the same time on the foundations, and after the long drought very little progress would be made. But there is much to be done before the digging, said Thrasilos, for as yet there is no road to the site, and without a road we can do nothing. I must have men to fell trees and level the difficult slopes. For no money that I can take out of my treasury, Otanes replied, will our farmers be persuaded to forgo the wheat and olive harvest. If I can get enough slaves to make sure of my road before the autumn, grandfather, the foundations can be dug when the rains have softened the ground. If nothing be done now, I cannot foretell the number of oxen that will die under the strain of dragging the timber and the stone up that steep hillside. But the threat of a heavy toll of oxen barely reached Otanes's ears, if it reached them at all; he was away in his memories of the years he had known, many a bad year but never such a winter as they had come through. Rain, snow, storms, he said, and it was not till we despaired of ever seeing the sun again that the dry weather came in, dark skies with very little blue in them, a dusty summer-time never known before in Greece, not by the oldest man in Aulis. There are many older than I, who am eighty, and when we meet we say: In our childhood the summers were very different—hotter days than these, it is true, but however the sun blazed the forest pools were not altogether without water. This year the pools

are bone-dry ; the neatherds drive their kine farther and farther into the hills ; the herons fish no longer—mice from the withered grass are their diet ; already the trees have begun to shed their leaves, and the lizards die on cracking walls. We have heard enough, father ! cried Biote. Thou reminst me of a pedlar with an open pack telling his goods, goods that are always the same under different names—excuses for stopping thy grandsons from building a temple that will save Aulis from the wrath of Poseidon and Hephaestus, vain excuses truly, for what will it benefit thee to build ships if the sea is to rise up against thee ? Mnasalcas's wool, forsooth ! It would seem that thou'rt more concerned with wool than with the glory of Rhesos and Thrasilos. There are always excuses ; thy pack is filled with them——Biote, thou'rt inconsiderate ; thy mind is blown up ; thou'rt all afame. It is past thy bedtime, Otanes, said Kebren ; take my arm. And so the evening that was to have been spent in happiness and pleasant talk ended in discord.

CHAPTER XV

SWEET mother, thou art the fortune of the temple and wilt get the slaves we need from grandfather. Thou shalt have thy slaves, Rhesos, and when thou gettest them thou'l give me a hug and a kiss. Both are promised to thee, mother, and given before the deed that earns them. . . . now release me. And the luck of Rhesos and Thrasilos being in the ascendant, some Scythians who had been brought into Aulis to be trained to row in the galleys were sent instead to build the road that Thrasilos needed. A little later another gang was sent forward to fell trees and to dig the foundations of the dwellings destined for the priestesses. If we had Africans I could promise the temple in a year from now, said Thrasilos ; but as we have no Africans we must do the best we can with Scythians. He called for several more teams of oxen, and

every day carts arrived from the quarries laden with roughly hewn stones. To be chiselled by masons on the spot to avoid delay ; so said Thrasilos, speaking out of his determination that the temple should be finished before next summer. Much time is lost, he continued, going to and from Aulis ; and he ordered tents to be raised on the hillside, poles and tarred canvas serving as materials.

Donkeys are numerous, Rhesos remarked one morning, looking about him. He had come up the hillside to see how the work was progressing, and whilst showing him round Thrasilos said : We are dependent on the donkeys for our food ; they bring tunny-fish, bread and wine from the wharves, water from the stream. Sure of their meals, our Scythians seldom make for the hills, and we are spared the pain of hunting deserters with dogs. Thou speakest as if the hunting of deserters was distasteful to thee, Thrasilos ; but if absconding slaves were not hunted and brought to bay we should soon be without slaves. Thrasilos did not answer, and to turn his brother's thoughts from yesterday's hunt he pointed to the hoist whereby the stones would be lifted to their positions in the wall, and leading him round the encampment he called his attention to the masons' sheds, the carpenters' shop, and the smithy at which all the metal-work would be made. Stooping under the picket-lines Rhesos made friendly advances to the draught animals, attracted oftener by the donkeys than by the horses. Here is my hut, said Thrasilos : I sleep here sometimes. Mother would like me to return to Aulis, but to get the men to work one must be on the spot, watching and mingling with them. We often sit round the fires at night in good-fellowship, telling stories, and I have no fear of an evil blow. Why should a slave who is well fed and cared for kill me or injure me ? Rather will he lift his hand against an assailant. My fears are others. We are at the end of the summer, and during the autumn the hillside will be barely habitable. We shall have to bring those who have not huts into Aulis ; every outhouse and shed will be overcrowded, and

there will be troubles in the streets and discontent. Our neighbours will not thank me, and my excuses that for a temple we must have slaves will not satisfy them for the importation of so many, and to pacify them father may ask for the return of twenty or thirty or fifty slaves to row in the galleys. Thou art full of discontent, my Thrasilos ! Rain fell heavily last week and we had some yesterday, Thrasilos continued : the long spell o dry weather is breaking, and then—— I wish I could helj thee, Rhesos answered, and he left Thrasilos watching the couds gathering.

The rain did not come tha night nor the next day, but a downfall was preparing, so Thrasilos said, during which no work would be done on th hillside. No downfall came, however, only heavy showe s and bright intervals. If it would only rain for a month, Rhesos, and then stop, I could manage. What breaks my heart is the irregularity of the rain. Yesterday the morning was fair and I hoped for a fine day, but it rained at noon ; the evening was fine, and then this morning more rain, and such heavy rain that the slaves had to run for shelter to the trees, bare trees that the storm hath robbed of their leaves. A pitiful sight is the hillside in the rust and sludge of winter. Will it ever cease raining ? he asked Rhesos whenever they met. Yes, Thrasilos, it will cease, but none can tell thee when, and it profits thee nothing to look so gloomy. Prophecy is vain, Rhesos ; listen to that wind. Sometimes as I lie awake at night it seems to me that the wind is intent on ripping up the hills themselves ; it begins far away on a low mutter. There is something uncanny in the mouthing of the wind ; like a fierce animal mad with pain it falls upon the town, and then dies away, to come again. I am afraid father will lose many ships at sea this winter. And the imaginations of the two young men were filled with images of splitting ships and planks and oars and castaways struggling in the slough and on the crest of the waves. Our fortune is certainly precarious, said Rhesos, and the brothers parted, to meet again with the same words on

their lips, the same hope in their hearts : A break in the weather ! A break in the weather I certainly need, Thrasilos said to himself, but Rhesos can work in rain as well as in shine. Happy Rhesos ! And he might have begun to ask himself if his brother were truly happy—for Rhesos had never spoken of the statue he was carving, nor asked him to come to see it, as was his wont—if his thoughts had not been subdued by a long bright ray. The weather is breaking ! he cried. There was a heavy shower that evening, but a week later, towards the middle of January, spring began to appear, and all the slaves were at work on the hillside. Every week made a difference to the temple ; the walls began to rise, and Thrasilos said one morning to his brother : I think we shall have our temple this year after all.

No sooner had the words passed his lips than he began to wonder why Rhesos was not in his workshop carving Aphrodite and why he never spoke of his statue, telling of the day's work, sometimes exalted, sometimes depressed—neither one nor the other, only dark silence. Dear Rhesos, tell me, he said at last, hath the marble proved unworkable, cross-grained ? And with an alacrity that surprised him Rhesos answered : I have made many sketches, Thrasilos, I cannot tell thee how many. A new Aphrodite seems to rise up in my mind, one that will please me and might please Phidias, and I work on it feverishly ; but in the night I wake, to lie sleepless, and the hours go by remoulding the day's work in imagination. The same the next day and the next ; week in, week out, I strive after shadows, the desire to create active in me always. But an Aphrodite, Rhesos— Thrasilos, I beseech thee ! I foresee thy words ; I have heard them from mother and father, some of them even from grandfather. An Aphrodite may be kneeling or sitting or lying, they say, and to their vain talk I answer that Aphrodite must live in me before I can draw her out of the rebellious clay. Thy name was always on our lips in Athens, said Thrasilos, and thou wert always the example that Phidias bade us admire and model ourselves

upon. To work under the master's eye, Thrasilos, is easy to a workman who knows his business. The lonely workshop, with nothing in it but the lump of clay, is the test ; all then comes out of himself, or does not come, as frequently happens. But, Rhesos, thou perceivest only ideas ; abstractions do not trouble thee. The day we ran away to Athens together, thou with the two gossiping women in a box—— Merely decorative sculpture, Thrasilos, well enough in its way ; but it was the intention rather than the result that Phidias liked. He is a decorative sculptor himself, the greatest the world hath ever known, but unconcerned with the art of carving. If the carving were weak he would see it at once, of course, but he is not a marble worker by nature as I am, and finding nothing in my Aphrodite except handiwork, he would turn away, forget it, and talk of something else. The empty brain is my trouble, not thine, Thrasilos, and the day may come when, all my high hopes fallen, I shall have to face the truth that I am no great sculptor, only a clever student who can work under the master. A common lot indeed this is. How many inspired pupils have we not seen working under Phidias, great within, naught without his influence, wretched creatures in a workshop, calling on the Gods to help them ; but the Gods do not answer, and the clay remains clay under their hands. We have known many such, Rhesos, but thou'rt not like these ; thou'l outgrow thy fears ; months will go by—— Thinkest thou, Thrasilos, that I can endure my life of emptiness and despair for months ? Not for much longer can I bear with it. The mind breaks like a thread, and then ? Death at one-and-twenty, Rhesos ! But should thy Aphrodite never come into marble thou'l accept the image that hath come down to us and carve a statue that will serve till a better inspiration comes to thee ? I would do much for thy sake, Thrasilos, but the conventional Goddess I cannot accept ; the common vision is as far from me as the seldom. But if, said Thrasilos—— There is no “if,” Rhesos interjected ; there is something within me that cannot come out, and I am tortured by

night and day. More than that I cannot tell thee.

Thrasilos watched his brother descend the hillside and was sorry for him, till pity for Rhesos's agony gave way to the dread that the temple might remain for ever without a statue. If I had not begun to build till Aphrodite was in the marble, even if Rhesos could not abide the sight of her, life would be better than it is at present. Nothing worse could have befallen : a half-built temple and no hope of a statue to fill it, the walls rising day after day, till at last the awful truth becomes known to everybody. I cannot bear it ! I cannot bear it ! and he burst into tears and cries. But tears and cries, though they may soothe sorrow, do not make an end of it. The temple must go on, he said, and I must share the bitterness of it with Rhesos. An unexpected tide of thought rose up in his mind, and he was about to blame Rhesos's selfishness ; but he checked the words, saying : He cannot help himself, nor can I. And he watched the slaves hoisting stones and the masons fitting them, his despair deeper, he believed, than his brother's. He will tell me if he gets the idea he is seeking ; to put questions to him will only. . . . He stopped, remembering that Rhesos had said he would have nothing to live for if sculpture failed him. For Rhesos to put an end to his life will bring death nearer to me ; I could not live without Rhesos ; and then yielding himself to a belief in the power of the Gods, he added : Aphrodite will not allow her temple to come to naught ; she will help us. But the Goddess obstinately remained away, till at last a thought came to him, and the next time he met Rhesos on the hillside he said : The cause of thy dryness, Rhesos, is hidden from thee, but not from me. Thy suffering is Phidias ; his genius hath choked thine. I thank thee, Thrasilos ; it may be as thou sayest ; but what is the remedy ? To escape from Phidias thou must go to him, Thrasilos answered. He is a great man and will understand thee better than I can, telling thee things that will restore thee to thyself. Go to him. . . .

I have faith in thee, Thrasilos, Rhesos said at last. Thy

counsel is wise, I am sure it is. And in the morning he rode out of Aulis in meditation, his mind bent on the story he would tell Phidias. For everything is in the telling, he said. The poets write twenty different plays on the same subject ; everything is in the telling, and I must have a care to gain Phidias's sympathy before I set him into the secret. It is hard to do sculpture in a Boeotian village twelve leagues from Athens, I might say ; village streets do not inspire sculpture as doth a walk round the Parthenon, and there is none in the village who resembles a Goddess. He began another story, and then a third and a fourth, and he continued to remake the story he would tell Phidias till his horse stopped to graze. Thou hast strayed from the road to Athens into the road to Tanagra ! he cried, and his hand was on the bridle to turn the horse round. But the animal would not be gainsaid, and remembering that they were within a league of the oracle of Amphiaraos, he dropped the bridle on the horse's neck, saying : His instinct shall guide me. Should he stop at the gate opening on to the path that leads to the rocky hill out of which the pythoness speaks, I shall take his instinct for a sign and consult the oracle, a simple village oracle without fame, but mayhap in charge of a far-seeing pythoness. So did his thoughts chatter, till a voice cried : Passenger, turn aside and learn what the Fates have in store for thee !

On looking in the direction of the voice he saw an old man leaning over a gate that he held open invitingly. I would have audience of the oracle, Rhesos said, to which the old man replied : Thou canst not be better directed than by me. Methinks we have some sort of inherited acquaintanceship, Rhesos continued, as he rode through the gate, my father having met thee by the bridge over the river Asopos in the years back, and again by this gate some six years ago. We had escaped from home, and he came hither to learn of our whereabouts from the oracle. I should have recognised thee before, said the old man, but my eyes are not what they once were. Dismount and we'll talk easier, my hand on one rein

and thine on the other, for being a small man I can talk to thee under the bridle. So thou hast come to put a question to the oracle ? Now, it is a pleasure to do business with old friends. Isn't that so ? he added, grinning, showing a fang or two in his laughter, and they followed the path till they came to a rocky hill shrouded in oak-trees. Thou art the first this morning, and thy future shall be made known to thee in hexameters for a price that she would not accept from anybody but a friend of mine. A hundred drachmæ will not be too heavy for thy purse ? The fewer the drachmæ the lighter the purse, Rhesos answered ; a cruel jest thou puttest upon me. But hold thy palm and I will do the count. And satisfied with it, the old man went away By some secret cavern he reaches her, Rhesos muttered, and he watched the shadows of birds passing over the meadow, regretful that he was not learned in divinations, till the old man returned, saying : I will take charge of thy horse. Go thou to yon cleft and put thy question.

Art within hearing of my voice, O pythoness ? Truly I am within hearing, the pythoness answered, and when she had heard Rhesos's story she said: Now leave me to consider my answer. Rhesos was moved to ask her how long he would have to wait, but the old man checked him, saying: She is now in the swoon in which the answer will be revealed to her. And for how long will the swoon last ? Ten minutes, half-an-hour, the old man answered, according to the strength of the inspiration. And to help the half-hour away, said Rhesos, wilt tell me if the oracle of Trophonios interpreted thy dream for thee ? I must return to the gate lest I miss a passenger, sir. And the old man hurried away, leaving Rhesos in grave suspense, inventing answers from the oracle, every one ruinous to his hopes. At last the pythoness's voice called to him, and he hastened to the cleft expectant :

Since thy quest be a pattern betake thee now to the green wood

Sculptor and wait her coming beneath the shadow of plane-trees

Shaking her golden locks exultant alone in the sunrise
Thou shalt behold her at last foam-born Aphrodite in Aulis.

A green wood on the way to Thermopylæ, overlooking the strait? Rhesos cried. And on what day will the Goddess appear to me? Tell me, O pythoness. To-morrow at sunrise, the next day or the next, or a week later—which? Thy question hath been answered, the pythoness replied. But there are many woods along the coast, and should I miss the one thou hast in mind? — Get thee hence! I would know to which wood to turn my steps in the morning, Rhesos shouted. I beseech thee, Pythioness! And no reply coming up the cleft, he called on the old man to go to the pythoness and beg her to be more explicit. I dare not; I am but the humble servant of the oracle, said the old man, and as they stood staring at each other the pythoness spoke again:

Bend thine arc for the shooting of ganders on goose-grazed commons.

Thou hearrest? cried the old man. She adds a fifth verse. A rude and insolent verse, said Rhesos. Believe me, sir, that no thought of incivility was in her mind. Why then doth she bid me to shoot ganders? Rhesos asked sourly. Go thy way, son of Kebren; thou hast had thine answer. Thy father was kind to me, giving me several drachmæ before he rode away to Athens in pursuit of his sons. Give me as many as he gave, and I'll offer prayers that the Goddess shall appear to thee on her way to the shore. . . . Five drachmæ more, and I'll pour libations! Thy palm closes on the last, said Rhesos; be satisfied, having gotten mine all. But the old man still clung to the bridle, insistent, and it was not until another applicant engaged his attention that he released it, leaving Rhesos to ride towards Aulis forgetful of everything except the morrow's sunrise with the Goddess enthroned in it.

Thou'rt home early from Athens, said Thrasilos I

stopped at Tanagra to consult the oracle, Rhesos replied. But the moment is not one for questions. When father and mother ask for news of Aphrodite, do thou break in with words that will turn their thoughts from me. My discovery that the last lot of slaves is not as good as the first will be enough, said Thrasilos ; and so sly were his words during the meal that parents and grandparent suspected no secret, and it was not till they rose from the table that Biote began to be troubled by something in Rhesos's face that she could not read aright. Rhesos admitted that he had worked from the first light to the last, and amid pitying looks he wandered to an unoccupied room, where he lay remoulding Aphrodite in his thoughts, to meet her afterwards in his dreams and to awaken terrified at catastrophes that he could not recall whilst watching for the stars to fade, for it was at the first stime of light that he had been bidden to the green wood to await her coming. But how will she instruct me when she rises from the foam ? With a gesture that I must not miss, he said, as he stopped to shake off the dust that his sandals collected at every step. Built out of sea-sand, the road fails to bind, he muttered, and the badness of the road was considered till his thoughts drifted from it to Aphrodite, and from Aphrodite to the stars and back again, to Thrasilos and his mother and the oracle—— That bade me wait the coming of the Goddess at the first rim of day. Yonder is the green wood, and this time my eyes do not deceive me ; the sky is changing from blue to grey, and on a pleasant bank of thyme I shall lie listening to the tide among the rocks till a great wave brings her ashore. He waited for an hour, and on the morrow he was again in the green wood, wondering whether Aphrodite would appear at the beginning of the sunrise or at the end of it. The incoming tide gurgles as it did yesterday, the crested waves come tumbling up the rocks, but without bringing Aphrodite to me. At last he saw her for a moment alone in the sunrise as she was predicted to appear. Tritons blew conch shells and loves disported, and then the vision faded ; the sea was empty

again and the waves churned in the little bay. I saw her between sleeping and waking, which is no seeing at all, he said. Waiting for her is a long time, and weariness comes to me under these great branches in front of that foaming sea. Yet I saw her. . . . But did I see her? he asked himself, as he returned to Aulis an unhappy man, clutching at hope, for despair was not yet.

On the third day a great effort was needed to leave his bed at dawn, and he rose from it fearing that if the Goddess did not appear that day he would never return to the wood; but on the fourth and the fifth day, and every day after that, habit helped him, and he shuffled down the sandy track full of hope that Aphrodite was conscious of his fidelity to her and would reward him at last with the gesture he had groped after for many long weeks vainly. But one morning as he was about to lift the branches of the tamarisk bushes aside he remembered that Goddesses do not break their appointments as mortals do. Had the oracle certain news of her, she would have come to my help before now. I am befooled by her or by the oracle, he added, and passing into the wood he asked himself if he had been sent only to listen to the little birds twittering in the branches and to watch the gulls half-asleep floating down the silver Euripos. A lovelier morning will never break for her to instruct a poor mortal, and no mortal ever needed her beauty more than I. She should have come as was promised, on the first day. And it seeming to him that disappointment is the human lot everywhere, he was about to leave the wood when two swimmers appeared in the flood. In a flush of expectancy he said: Can it be that I am among the immortals, come upon me unawares? Swimming hand over hand they come, cleaving the incoming tide, rejoicing; and afraid that they too might vanish into nothingness, he kept his teeth clenched lest a cry should escape him. Now they are wading through the surf, becoming at every step more like mortals, two girls swimming from Eubœa, no more than that. And taking heart that he was among his own kin, he watched them, each

turning herself to her fellow for judgment of her shape. As if dissatisfied with judgment by their eyes, they resort to measurement, he said, and are seeking a reed or rush. A tally, he continued, and to make sure that his eyes were not deceiving him, he bent the tamarisk bushes aside ; but a branch slipped from his fingers, making known his presence to the girl standing for measurement. We need thee ! she cried. Come hither !

We swam over from Eubœa to submit ourselves to the judgment of the first man we met, and none seeming to be about we tried to discover by measurement which hath the prettier rump. Ye might have come on a goatherd, said Rhesos, and the girl that had called him from the bushes answered that a goatherd was chosen by Zeus to decide between Hera, Athene and Aphrodite, to which the other girl, in whom he had already discovered his Aphrodite, added : Our fancies often foresaw a king's son under a goatskin cloak. And a crown and a wedding ! cried Rhesos. But who are ye who would repeat on the shore the judgment of Paris on Mount Ida ? Mnasalcas is our father, Leto our mother. Mnasalcas, the great sheep-farmer ? Rhesos asked. The same ; and thou ? Rhesos, grandson of Otanes, the shipper of Aulis, returned from Athens lately to build a temple and carve a statue in honour of Aphrodite. Architect and sculptor in one ? My brother Thrasilos is the architect ; I am the sculptor. A pleasant story ; my sister and I will listen to it—— But before I tell it, Rhesos interjected, I would hear your names. I am Earine, replied the girl in whose shapes he had discovered a pattern for Aphrodite, and he was glad of it, for he felt there was an inspiration in the name. And I am Melissa. A pretty name indeed, he answered, the lack of enthusiasm in his voice conveying to Melissa that he liked her sister's name better than her own. But before we hear the story, said Earine, we would have thee settle the dispute, for it is surely given to a sculptor more than to another to say which rump is the prettier. My judgment can be favourable

but to one, Rhesos replied. We are not afraid of a sculptor's judgment; is not that so, Melissa? Melissa acquiesced. Brave girls! said Rhesos. Then show yourselves in profile and in full. And the girls having complied with his bidding, Rhesos pronounced his judgment: In thee, Earine, I discover my Aphrodite. A judgment that leaves the dispute unsettled, said Melissa. As well mayst thou say: I love one sister better than another, she having the most money. A goatherd then would have given you a better judgment, Rhesos answered. I offer thee immortality, Earine. Hast any proof that thy statue is immortal? she asked. Risk is inseparable from all things, even immortality, he replied. In the same breath Phidias talk of me and of Alcamenes, and Alcamenes is a great sculptor. Why, then, shouldst thou not confide thyself to me? Thou askest merely for my body, Rhesos? I shall have to come to Aulis to be carven? Thy body is carven already in my imagination, here by the seashore, but for me to complete the carving thou'l come to Aulis. On looking over thy shoulder thou gavest me the gesture I had groped after for many days and weeks. Thou shalt be Aphrodite of the Fair Rump for our time and for all time. Sculptor, thou dost tempt me sorely! Our immortalities are mutual, Earine, I the carver of the marble and thou the guider of my hand. Thou'l marry me and we shall travel together over the Greek world— But who will build the temples? cried Melissa, looking back from the tussocks into which she was prying as if for a bird's nest. Did I not tell that my brother is an architect? And our tastes being different, he may prefer a fuller shape than I have in mind; wherefore we shall all be equal. I may not prefer him to thee, which would testify to the Gods being unfavourable to us mortals, Melissa said, as she returned to them. But tell me of thy brother. I will indeed, and anywhere except on this naked seashore, without privacy for talk. In this wood . . . and drawing back the tamarisk bushes he pointed out the way they might enter without danger of tearing themselves with

thorns. Ye have surely no prettier wood in Eubœa, he said—a little wood of a hundred trees, but how shapely! And that they might see it as he did, he bade them admire the plane-trees, saying: The comeliest of all except the willow. Here are three beautiful willows, tall as plane-trees. The pines behind them have their beauty; and he laid an accent on the word *their* in the hope of reminding Melissa that were it not for his statue he would have admired her rump more than her sister's. But Melissa showed no signs of relenting, and perforce he spoke of the mossy bank and the faint odour of thyme, and to interest her showed her a robin's nest in the ivy, saying: The young robins are out of the nest and the parent bird cries a warning that is unheeded. To woo her sister out of her sulk Earine said: Never have I known thee before without a thought for birds, Melissa—young birds, too, coming from the nest for the first time; but Melissa did not answer, and they sat on the mossy bank under the willows to hear Rhesos tell why he had come to the green wood that day.

I have been here every morning at daybreak for nearly two weeks, sent hither by the oracle of Amphiaraos. On what intent didst thou consult the oracle? Earine asked. The story is a long one; and his eyes went to Melissa, who showed no signs of wishing to hear it. But Earine pleaded, and he told the story, shortening it as he told it, discovering from Melissa's distracted mien that nothing is so long as a shortened story. At last Melissa said: I think I will leave you; I am always happy when watching birds and listening to their songs. As she was about to start to her feet Rhesos cried: Pass not across the sward lest thy feet blot out the delicate tracery of the blackbirds' claws on the dewy grass. Are my humiliations never to cease? cried Melissa. We came hither, my sister and I, in warm friendship to learn which had the prettier rump, thinking thereby to put an end to a continued discussion. Hers is preferred by thee because it suits the statue thou hast in mind—for no better reason—and now— Dearest Melissa, it was thou who willed a judg-

ment, saying it would be terrible to live and die without knowing this one thing. We swam together laughing, Earine continued, with no thought of a sculptor in our minds, thinking of some goatherd, who alone could have given a fair, natural judgment. I beg the ζ , Rhesos, to speak to her, she added in a whisper. Thy beauty, Melissa, is equal to thy sister's, but it is a different beauty. All the proportions of the temple my brother is building are to be discovered in thee, all the body's adjustments : haunches, belly, shoulders, neck and head. Thou'rt architecture in essence, whereas thy sister is sculpture. And he told that he had foreseen the temple and statue in his imagination when they stood together on the shore. But thy brother, Rhesos—will he see his temple in Melissa ? The thought that he may see his temple in me does not tempt me ! cried Melissa. Thou art unreasonable, said Earine. It is not well for thee to charge me with unreasonableness, Earine, thou who hast got everything. Not everything, Melissa, only Rhesos. Wouldst thou then have the two brothers ? Melissa asked, at which Earine laughed, and whilst they waited for the tide to slacken, Rhesos said : Thrasilos will wait in the green wood to-morrow at daybreak. How shall I know him ? asked Melissa, and he answered : Here are daffodils blowing on the skirts of the wood. Gather a few, and I will pass them on to Thrasilos, who will carry them in his hand. And it was with such fair words that Rhesos persuaded Melissa into forgetfulness of the incident which had vexed her. But art thou indifferent, she asked, her face litten with a smile, to everything but stone-cutting ? Is thy mind still possessed of marble amid currant bushes in flower ? Snuff the air. And tell me if marble effigies are as beautiful in shape and hue as the birds flying through the branches. A sculptor should have eyes for birds as well as for rumps. Thrasilos will tell thee to-morrow, said Rhesos, that I have an eye for the heron always. And should have for yonder bird in blue-grey feathers, replied Melissa. We know him in Eubœa as the shepherd's companion. And proceeding out of

the wood down the shelving sward, they came upon a dead chifffaff caught in a snare. The shepherds catch them by hundreds in Eubœa, said Melissa, and whosoever set this snare forgot it. And leaving the bird to be picked by a gull or rat, they walked along the shore, Melissa a little ahead in search of a ring-ousel. But her search was a vain one—The ring-ousel having gone northward yesterday or the day before, she said ; if you wish it I will try again. And getting no answer she walked round the wood, returning to them, saying : The tide must have turned by now. Time it is that we betook ourselves again to the water, Earine, and thou, Rhesos, wilt not forget to give the daffodils I have gathered to thy brother, Thrasilos.

CHAPTER XVI

He caught up a lump of clay and moulded in an ever-increasing certainty that Thrasilos' temple would not lack a statue worthy of it. A woman's body is full of exquisite designs, he said, head, neck, and shoulders flowing together, accumulating in the hips and ending in long, lovely legs and straight feet, toes as beautifully shaped as fingers. But my sketch was as naught till I caught the movement that rustled from head to heel when Earine looked over her shoulder. For the perfect enjoyment of his success he lay down within view of his statue, saying : For five weeks, or five months, I was unable to achieve anything, though in good health of body and mind, and Thrasilos attributed this strange sterility to the influence of Phidias. But would Phidias have set me free ? A knock interrupted his thinking. Now, who can this be ? He waited for another knock, and recognising it as his brother's he rose to let him in

Tell me, Rhesos, how and when Aphrodite breathed into thy clay. At daybreak, Rhesos answered. Thou mockest me ! cried Thrasilos. No mockery at all, said Rhesos, but a long

story. Which thou wilt not delay to tell ? Thine advice, Thrasilos, was that I should go to Phidas, and I rode away thinking thine advice to be good, and maybe it was good. But my horse wandered from the road to Athens into the road to Tanagra, and finding it hard to compel him out of it, I said : Let the horse be my oracle : and he ambled on, stopping in front of the old man that father met long ago coming down the hillside from Dekeleia. Father always speaks of him as an old man, and old he certainly is now ; and having wasted all his life in seeking an interpretation of a dream—— Leave out the dream ! cried Thrasillo . We are weary of it. But Rhesos, as if he enjoyed his brother's eagerness, continued : Never have I seen a man so like himself : white hair standing on end all over his head, a hooked nose and a prominent chin, an imperfect voice, and a hobbling gait as if his right leg were shorter than his left. Even my words should bring him before thee. On with thy tale, Rhesos ! And Rhesos repeated the hexameters that had sent him to the green wood every morning till two swimmers appeared in the strait. Thou canst not guess who were the swimmers ? he asked. Goddesses sent by Aphrodite, Thrasilos answered. Not so wonderful as that, but two beautiful girls, the daughters of Mnasalcas. Thy face shows some disappointment. Thou wouldest have had Aphrodite come in person to guide me, but the Goddess was wiser than thou. She sent me Earine, who will be both model and wife. Such is my reading of the oracle's answer to my question, and all that hath happened since seems in keeping with it. Behold my Aphrodite !

Before I give another thought to thine Aphrodite, Rhesos, tell me of Earine's sister, if she be lovely also ? Innocent Thrasilos, of a certainty she is ! The sisters will not be separated, and why should they be ? Melissa gathered the bunch of daffodils which thou seest in the vase at thine elbow, and begged me to give them to thee. Go at daybreak and await her coming in the green wood, or on the open beach ; sight of thee among the rocks will hasten them across the

strait. But if we should be disappointed one in the other, said Thrasilos, and I should steal away abashed and reluctant—And leave the sisters to swim back again indignant and ashamed? Rhesos asked. A perfect story hath always a perfect end, and thy guessings are wide of the scheme of our destiny. The Goddess hath woven it closely. So it would seem, Thrasilos replied, yet in every fate there is a loose thread. Brother, our destinies are firmly knit, wherefore be by the sea to-morrow. Melissa will please thee and thy pleasure will be hers. Thou'l be with me? Thrasilos asked. Earine will be there, he added. Recount my Aphrodite to her, Thrasilos, and she will be consoled; it is herself. Now leave me. I have to go in search of a trusty carter to bring my Aphrodite to Tanagra. A wheel falling into a deep rut might turn it back into clay. In the firing it may crack, said Thrasilos. A thing that never happens, Rhesos replied, if the oven be not opened too soon. I will withdraw one of my carters from his work, Rhesos, and send him to thee. A promise? cried Rhesos. A man who will deliver thy statue to the manager shall be here within the hour, Thrasilos answered, and he went away, leaving Rhesos to wrap the Goddess in cloths that would ensure for her a safe journey— Unless indeed, he said to the carter, thy cart should overturn. My oxen are quiet animals, replied the carter, and by keeping my eyes on the road in front of me I shall be able to bring back a docket telling that the statue hath escaped accident—words that soothed Rhesos's alarm at parting with his Goddess and left him following the cart in his imagination, till suspicions of ruts and stumbling oxen arose again and compelled him to the doorway, where he was stayed by the thought that however fast he might run he would always be behind the carter.

The statue will be fired without danger; and stepping back into his workshop he locked the door behind him and began to pile up enough clay for a second figure. Double the size of the one still jolting on its way to Tanagra, he said; part of a sculptor's business is to provide against accidents. And

he continued piling clay round a stick and wires, till this proving a wearisome task in his present mood he lay down to dream of the different subjects he had always had stored in his memory for achievement when his work on the Parthenon should be finished. A shaft of golden light falling between the pillars had revealed the beauty of a boy's back to him as the lad bent forward to encourage his cock to the attack, and after the combat he had talked with the boy about the preparation of a fighting fowl asking if he might be present at the shearing of comb and haunches and the fixing of spurs. A subject, he said, which Tanagra would be glad to accept and which I should be glad to execute. But he kept his hands from the clay lest a new work might rob him of the inspiration he had received from the Goddess, or lessen it. But temptation is watchful ever, and in the morning as he sat thinking of Aphrodite, now in the oven, a knock roused him, and recognising the shapes he needed in the boy who brought the message, he bade him strip himself of his tunic ; and the hours passed without his perceiving their passing, till Thrasilos came to tell what had befallen him on the shore.

On catching sight of the kneeling boy Thrasilos's face darkened and the words slipped from him : Already unfaithful to the Goddess ! The Goddess hath gone to Tanagra. Rhesos answered, and rewarding the boy with a drachma he bade him depart, saying on his return from the door : Had he remained to hear thy story our secret would be common talk within the hour. But there was anger in thy voice, Rhesos, as if my interruption—— I could not rouse myself out of the wonder of the boy's back as he stooped to urge his cock to the fight, but now I am eager to hear thy story. Thou wert in the green wood ? On the shore by the green wood, Thrasilos answered, and Melissa and Earine came over swimming as soon as they saw me. And thou'rt satisfied with Melissa ? More than satisfied ; she hath my whole heart. And thou wert presented to her with due ceremony ? Yea ; and afterwards we betook ourselves to the wood and found much

whereof to tell each the other. Would I had been there to hear you ! But didst deliver my message to Earine that her effigy had gone to Tanagra to be fired ? Truly I did, Rhesos, and she said she would liefer thou wert by herself than by her sculpture. She will learn from me to love sculpture, Rhesos replied. But where is she now ? Returned to Eubœa, Thrasilos answered. Why didst thou not bring her here ? I have begun another statue, and posing for an hour—— Thou wouldest not have had her walk through the streets of Aulis naked ? Aulis is a small place, Rhesos answered. Cast thine eyes round the workshop and see if thou canst recognise the larger figure which I have begun lest the smaller should meet with mishap. I need Earine—an hour would be enough. She and Melissa will come over to-morrow, said Thrasilos, to meet mother, father and grandfather—— A knock interrupted their confidences.

. . . My model returned ! And what hast thou brought in thy basket ? A cock, the boy answered, and Rhesos appealed to Thrasilos for praise of his model's thoughtfulness and called to the boy to excite the cock to imaginary combat, saying : I would see him, feathers erect, in battle array, choosing the moment to spring and to strike. But the cock only chortled and strutted, apparently in search of crumbs, bringing down Rhesos's wrath on the boy. Thy cock is a worthless coward ! he said, to which the boy replied : Master, let me fetch another cock to enflame him. Half-an-hour, Rhesos answered, an hour, perhaps, will be spent seeking ; wherefore, Thrasilos, if thou wouldest be more than usually amiable, go in search of the needed cock and I will continue my work on the boy's back.

Thrasilos invented excuses, saying he knew not the house, nor even the street, and that the boy had better return on the morrow with two cocks. But Rhesos could not wait, he would make shift with one, aided by remembrances, and Thrasilos, disguising his impatience in an assumed attention to his brother's modelling, warned him against an extreme of

naturalness, making bold at last to remind him that they had many things to discuss together. Five minutes more, and I shall be ready to weigh and consider with thee, Thrasilos, if a year or two will have to pass before we cross the gangway of one of grandfather's ships to voyage—whither? The word *weddings* was on his lips, and he might have blurted out as much of the story as would have set the whole town agog before evening if Thrasilos had not intervened: I beg thee, Rhesos, to attend to thy modelling and to think of nothing else till it be done. And whilst watching Rhesos put his hand to add or to take away, he said to himself: I believe he looks upon a piece of sculpture as more important than Earine! How little do I know my brother, yet we love each other. And to while the time away he bethought himself of a phrase of his grandfather's, he remembering the day and the hour: they were wandering round legendary ruins, and the talk turning on destiny Otanes had said: From the beginning a man's life is like an arrow, barbed and feathered. It springs from the bow on its fated journey, to fall short, to fly too high or too low. At last a well-directed arrow reaches the mark, and the Archer laughs, for the quarry is but a shadow. Thrasilos thought of other epigrams that had struck his fancy, but his stock was not large enough to carry him to the end of Rhesos's interest in a clay cock, and at last, unable to command his temper any longer, he said: I have business on the hillside and will return in an hour. To thy business, Thrasilos, whilst there is light; for me there is still enough for an hour's work. My back is sorely tired, said the boy; I must straighten it for a while. Then rest, Rhesos replied, dejected, and Thrasilos said to himself: Happily the sun hath no concern for Rhesos, else he would be modelling through the night, forgetful that we are to meet father and mother at supper to settle whether our weddings shall be postponed till after the dedication of the temple. As he was about to leave the workshop the day darkened suddenly, and Rhesos said: Now, boy, to-morrow at the same hour, and this time bring the

second cock. We, Thrasilos, will enjoy the last hour of light on the hillside, and thou'lt tell me what thou camest to tell but could not, my model being present.

Thrasilos began to speak, but Rhesos interrupted him, saying that he had begun to model the cock-fight because he could not work at Aphrodite continuously without a break ; and he was about to develop the need of a break in a man's work when the gloom deepened, and he said : A strange day to meet so early in the year, the air still as in autumn, no stirring among the leaves, not a bird to be seen or heard, the flowers crouching on their stems as if panic-stricken. A strange day, Thrasilos ; hast thou known a day like it ? A memorable day truly, Rhesos, if it hath cast all thoughts of sculpture out of thee ! A scream came from the skies as if in answer, and the twain, thinking the Gods were upon them, hid their faces in their hands. But with each scream their belief in outraged Gods diminished, and looking through their fingers they saw eagles flying, screaming as they flew. Come down from Delphi, said Thrasilos, with tidings. With evil tidings, Rhesos answered ; replete with calamity they fly. Thirteen eagles wheeling over Aulis ! Let us hasten homeward ; under our roof we shall neither see nor hear. A war may have broken out on Olympus, said Thrasilos. Yet what more natural than an outcry of eagles ? The bleating lamb or a flight of doves would announce the return of Chronos. Otanes will tell us. Let not a word be spoken of our weddings, Thrasilos, on this evil day. Thou hearest me ? not a word. The sky wears an evil look and the eagles are frightened as we are. . . . Thirteen eagles wheeling over Aulis ! they cried, on entering the hall, and at the announcement of these tidings a hungry servitude forgot the supper still unserved by Biote's order. Thou sayest that thirteen eagles float above Aulis ? she asked. Come down from Delphi, no doubt, said Thrasilos, with the evil tidings that the Gods are at war ; at which the reprimand she had prepared dropped out of her mind and she reproved her sons for the words *evil tidings*,

warning them as they took their places at the table against speaking of omens, prophecies, soothings and the like in the presence of Otanes. For taking advantage of a recurrence of strength he is coming to eat with us, she said, and we must beware of disturbing his mind with tales of the flight of birds, which it may be amiss to interpret otherwise than that food is scarce upon Delphi and that they have come down in search of lambs and hares.

Biote's youthful slimness had disappeared, but she was still a pretty, plump woman with streaks of grey in her hair, and Rhesos admired his mother, accepting her as a woman who might awaken in many a man the thought that it would be pleasing to take her in his arms. And he did not cease to study her till the length of her admonitions withdrew his thoughts from her and compelled him, as it were, to discover in Kebren a man whom any son would be proud to point out as his father. Never hath he cast out of his soul that first prompting to travel over Greece and her islands, declaring that Helen was more than the wife of Menelaus, rather the guiding-star of all Greece to beauty—— Rhesos, of what art thou thinking? Of my warning? Of thee, mother. Such rare thoughts deserve to be put into words! and with lighted face she leaned towards her son. I was admiring thy constant youthfulness, mother. Thou hast always done thine own thinking, and to be ourselves always in our thoughts stays the wrinkles of age. A great discovery in one so young, Rhesos. Gathered from grandfather, Rhesos replied, who holds that all the knowledge we possess we bring into the world with us. Is not what I have told enough for thee, mother? My thoughts passed from thee to father, he continued, and very soon I was asking myself if he who was brought to Aulis by the voice of a God is scornful as thou of omens, descrying no other significance in the wheeling of eagles above Aulis than hunger. Hush, Rhesos! Grandfather is coming up the hall on the arm of Timotheus. . . . Why alarmed looks and hushed voices? Otanes asked. Was it of death you were speaking and ceased

to speak at my approach, deeming death a thing not to be spoken of in the presence of an old man? But the fear of death passes with the years. If it was not of death ye were talking was it of fate and of prophecy? or of the strange colours witnessed in the sky this evening? or of the flight of eagles which have been counted variously at nine, eleven, and thirteen? So thou hast heard, grandfather, of the eagles? Yes, Rhesos; Timotheus told me of them on my way hither; he saith also that many of the townsfolk, disturbed by a foreboding, have fled to the hills. We shall lose some slaves, no doubt, Biote replied. And when Otanes was seated, and propped with cushions, he let the dish of roasted beans pass, saying: I have eaten all I care to eat in my room.

Since grandfather hath been told of the menacing sky and the eagles, said Rhesos, no harm can come to him if we put questions. Biote did not answer, anxious as another to hear her father speak, and Rhesos continued: A too-direct question may not be answered by the wisest soothsayer, grandfather, but I would hear if thou hast other reasons besides the eagles for believing in the destruction of Aulis. Only the reasons that were urged at the council, said Otanes, that it might not be wise to tempt Poseidon's wrath by the building of a temple to Aphrodite within sight of his sea. The walls of the temple, I am told, are barely above ground, and the statue of Aphrodite is still in the mind—if it may be said to have taken form in thy mind, Rhesos. My statue hath passed into clay, grandfather, and the clay is being fired at Tanagra. Aphrodite sent me a pattern, and Thrasilos and I were agreed that the coming of the pattern should be kept secret till the will of the Gods became clearer; but now the moment hath come for me to speak of it. And when he had told of the bidding of the oracle, and of the arrival of Earine and Melissa, Otanes said: I remember them as the loveliest babes, not excepting thy mother, Rhesos. And a handsome fellow was Mnasalcas at the time when he turned down the blankets that I might see them better in their cots, a handsome man

and a wise man, and of all, a great breeder of sheep. One look at a yoe and he knew all about her, and as for a ram, the smell of him coming over the fields told him how many woes he might serve in a day. So well doth he know his sheep that I have often thought that there must be something of a sheep's nature in him, and these twenty years we have been doing business together show no mistake in my first judgment of him. What sayest thou, Kebren ? Every day our business with him increases, Kebren answered, and Otanes continued : The news that his daughters will marry my grandsons is what I would have wished, and I rejoice to hear it. But how did it come about ? for the lads were always in Athens learning their trades of hoisting pillars and carving statues. There was no courting, grandfather, only inspiration, the will of the Goddess being manifest in it. As I have told thee, having learnt from the oracle of Amphiaraos that I could get news of Aphrodite if I betook myself to the green wood— Yes, grandson, I remember thy story ; whilst in hiding among the rosemary bushes, hoping to see Aphrodite, Earine and Melissa came swimming across the strait. And thou rememberest, too, grandfather, that it was thou who gavest the casting vote for Aphrodite, the votes being equally divided between the Goddess and Poseidon ? I have not yet drooped into such forgetfulness, O Rhesos. My vote was given to Aphrodite for that she was more appropriate to thy genius than the rough Sea-God. On the day my vote was given my thoughts were that it might be wiser to place the town of Aulis under the protection of Poseidon ; but our lives are governed by different duties, our duty to ourselves and our duty to the Gods. The Gods watched the battles fought before Troy and gave success to one side and then to the other, but they are not concerned in our every action. It would be unreasonable to think of the Gods hurrying about the world settling everything ; the Gods are not busybodies. And, forsooth, philosophers are not always in agreement as to the existence of the Gods, some maintaining that the Gods live by virtue

of and through our belief, and that heaven and earth being counterparts, all that ever happens on earth is distorted in the crooked mirror of heaven. The Gods are subject to our loves and hates ; new Gods take the places of the old and the same stories are retold with variations. A tale comes to us from Babylon of a God that drowned the world that would not obey him, and we have a story, often told in the wilds of Eubœa, of the eternal strife waged between Zeus and Poseidon for the kingdom of earth, Zeus raising mountains and Poseidon waves.

It was not long after the fall of Chronos that Poseidon, afraid of the presence of a War-God on Olympus, commanded his legions to assemble and lay siege against him. Zeus may build high walls, said the Sea-God, but I can build quicker with water than he with stone, quicker and higher. And very soon the Gods were collected about Zeus in great fear, their cries resounding : Allay the rising tide, Zeus, else we perish ! I have sent messengers to Æolus to let loose a wind that will stay and then drive back the beleaguering tides, Zeus answered ; and with the great wind that was to save him always in his mind, the God put down his hand into the dry snow of Olympus, and scattering a little of it into the air uttered a great moan, for the wind carried the snow always the same way and he foresaw the end of Olympus. And he would have foreseen it truly if Hephaestus, whilst escaping up rocks from his forge, had not caught sight of his wife and Ares in a cleft—a sight that drove him back to his anvil and his hammer, which he did not leave till he had forged a net and some chains. With the net he entangled Ares, and having with the chains made him secure he drove off Aphrodite, calling her whore, punk and strumpet. But Aphrodite's need of Ares was so great that she recked little of the names that were hurled after her as she ran to the verge of the waters crying to Iris to come to her help. Nor had she long to wait before the beautiful Iris rose, saying : Thy bitter cries for help have reached my ears. What wouldest thou have of me ?

I would have thee carry a message from me to Poseidon. The Gods are drowning, Iris answered, and Poseidon hath no heed of their fate. Nor have I heed of Olympus, Aphrodite replied, only of my lover, enclosed in a net of iron and manacled in a cleft of these rocks by the swarthy Hephaestus, my husband. For what reason should Hephaestus be so cruel ? Iris asked, and Aphrodite answered : For no better reason than to close my mouth to the kissing of the gentle Ares. But thy message, fair Aphrodite ? Speak it, for the waters are rising. I would ask Poseidon to come to my aid. Whereupon Iris rose to a great height, and then descending in a curve she pierced the ocean, reaching at last to the portals of Poseidon's palace, which were opened to her by tides, and she was conducted to the great hall where the Sea-God sat receiving tidings of his conquests.

Fortress after fortress hath fallen ! he muttered, and then catching sight of Iris, he asked : Hast come with tidings of the engulfing of Olympus ? Not so, she answered, but of the dropping of the wind that Æolus let loose. This is bad news indeed, said Poseidon, and I must hurry away to meet Æolus and tell him that according to our pact he must loose another wind. But before setting forth, sire, hear my message. Be brief then, the Sea-God answered. I come, said Iris, from Aphrodite. I remember her as a child, said Poseidon, and he remained thoughtful, his memory of Aphrodite diverting his mind from Æolus and his bag of winds. Why doth she send thee ? he asked at last. What would she with me ? That I should pardon her father, Zeus ?—still defiant, I am told, hurling curses upon me from the heights of Olympus. Not so, sire ; she is forgetful of her father, having thought only for Ares, whom the swarthy smith Hephaestus, her husband—An ugly fellow, truly ! Poseidon interjected—hath chained in the cleft of a rock ; and she would beg thy help, knowing well that none but thou canst help her in this great strait of danger and fatality. Aphrodite I remember well as a beautiful girl, said Poseidon. Her childish beauty hath

passed into the diviner beauty of a woman, Iris answered, and with these words she whetted Poseidon's appetite, who murmured with well-assumed indifference that it would be a pleasure to see Aphrodite again and release Ares, since she desired him. Then I will return with the good news, said Iris, and thou'l find her waiting where the waters linger among the heights of Olympus. Tell her that she will not have to wait long for me! Poseidon cried, and forthright he ordered his golden chariot to be harnessed to the swiftest dolphins, and was carried by them over sea to where Athens now stands; and seeing everywhere the enlargement of his realm, he said: A happier day than this one I have never known. All things are bending to my will. The territories of Zeus have been given to me, and I am on my way to meet the beautiful Aphrodite.

As he spoke these words Aphrodite came to some secret knowledge of them, and hastening to unloose her hair still further, she contrived such gestures of woe as would appeal to the heart of her first lover; and putting an accent of mingled love and woe into her complaint, she turned to meet him, saying: So thou hast not forgotten me, Poseidon? Whosoever sets eyes on thee, Aphrodite, may never know forgetfulness of thee. Nor have I forgotten thee, Poseidon. Thy kisses were the first I knew, and first kisses are never forgotten, even among mortals, who forget all things else. The waters are rising, said Poseidon; tell me what is thy pleasure and thou shalt have it, for I am now near to being master of the world. But by no look or word did Aphrodite show that she had heard or understood this awful pronouncement. Her thoughts are elsewhere, the Sea-God muttered to himself, and aloud he said: Zeus broods upon his ruin on the highest peak. Poseidon, said Aphrodite, Hephaestus the smith, my husband, hath captured Ares and fastened him in a cleft among the rocks. If thou deniest thy help he is lost; but being master of the world, with thy trident thou canst break the chains and the net. Which I will do if thou'l

direct me, Poseidon answered. And having loosed Ares from the net and broken the fetters that bound him, he bade him hasten upwards to the heights, where he would find the Gods in their last refuge. But the waters are mounting ! cried Ares. I promised Aphrodite to release thee, Poseidon answered ; more than that I have not promised, and more than that I will not do. And in the hope of lengthening his span of immortality by a few hours, Ares made all haste to join his comrades on the top, leaving Poseidon to return to Aphrodite. And when he told her what he had accomplished, she thanked him, and kissed him for his good nature. But neither mortal nor immortal can receive Aphrodite's kiss without being inflamed, and Poseidon said : We cannot part like this, Aphrodite. It reckons me not if I possess the world and possess not thee ; wherefore thou shalt come ; and despite her protests and struggles he carried her to his chariot and away to his palace Ægæ beneath the sea, where he lived with her—for how long is not known, but two sons he had by her.

But, grandfather, why were the waters not withdrawn again and Eubœa reunited to the mainland ? Ah, Rhesos, there are things unknown to mortals, and that is one of them. Well, grandfather, if thou canst not tell me why that great rift was never closed by the power of Æolus or of Poseidon, thou canst tell me why I should forfeit the statue I have made of Aphrodite and begin one of the Sea-God, of whom I know nothing. Grandson, wait till thou hast heard the end of the story. And the old man continued : After the birth of her two sons Aphrodite wearied of Poseidon, who besought her to say why her face was no longer joyous with smiles and her voice with laughter ; and she answered him : A great longing hath come upon me to see the world now sunk under the sea. A universe of water is mine, Poseidon replied ; but the stars above me are not mine. Each power is controlled by a power higher than itself, and so even the Gods are not happy. And Poseidon mourned and was sorry he had destroyed the world.

Perhaps, said Aphrodite, thou mayst have left a green isle somewhere whither thou wilt take me, for I would see the sun again. Poseidon could give her no answer, but as he moved away, sorrowful, a triton came whispering to Aphrodite : The waters have subsided. Poseidon forgot the half-drowned world in his love of thee, and the pleasant groves, the flowering meads and the sunny shores of which I heard thee speak, await thee shouldst thou decide to return. But how shall I get back to the sunny shores of Thessaly ? Aphrodite asked, to its flowering meads, to its woods, to the sunlight, moonlight and the stars ? My heart is weary of glaucous caves, of trailing seaweed and cold-blooded fishes that know naught of Aphrodite. I would away, but how ? On my back, replied the triton. The doors of the palace are open. Then let us away, she said, whilst Poseidon sleeps. And in a little while (for tritons swim well) they were on top of the waves in view of the sun, and great was Aphrodite's joy when she saw the coast of Greece again.

The old man stopped speaking, and after waiting for him to continue Rhesos said : But that cannot be the end of the story, grandfather ? Have I not told, replied Otanes, of a great war between rival Gods, of the rape of Aphrodite and her return to reign over the kingdom of men, preferring men to dolphins and tritons and mermaidens and mermen, all scaly and fishy things ? A very pleasant story thou hast told, grandfather, informed with a truth for all time, the Gods it would seem being at variance like ourselves and as anxious for homage as we are. True, too true ! Otanes muttered. Not having ceased to mourn Aphrodite's loss, Poseidon is often stupid with hatred and envy, and barely resists the temptation to send to Æolus begging for a west wind to overwhelm Greece. So, grandfather, thou wouldest have me accept the dreaming of a shepherd in days long gone by rather than the oracle of Amphiaraos ? Otanes did not answer, and after waiting for the old man to recover his thoughts, and ignoring signs for silence from his mother, Rhesos said that

the only way out of the difficulty they were in would be the building of two temples, one on the knoll and the other at the valley's end, to which Kebren replied that he did not know where the money was to come from to build two temples ; and he spoke of their losses till Rhesos interrupted him : Wouldst thou have me destroy my statue of Aphrodite in the hope of soothing the anger of Poseidon ? Thy statue, Kebren answered, is still in the clay, and—— And the clay can be turned into a statue of Poseidon—is that the project thou wouldst have me consider ? Thrasilos will tell me, if he be in thy confidence. Thrasilos's eyes reproached his brother, and Rhesos's heart misgave him for a moment. Better that my statue should perish than Aulis—— I entertain no such thought ! Thrasilos cried. I thank thee, Thrasilos ; but if I know thee at all, thou hast a more attentive ear for the droning of a shepherd than for an oracle. And more care for the safety of our town than thou, Rhesos, said Kebren ; and when Rhesos asked his father what he might have learnt from grandfather's story if he had not been intent on the saving of his statue, Kebren raised his hand, and in the silence thereby imposed a rumble reached them from afar. Zeus speaking in low tones, or distant grain carts ? he asked. Another rumble, and they believed in grain carts, till the thunder crashed, and with a violence that set them all thinking that the ancient war between Zeus and Poseidon was about to begin again.

This time the voice of Zeus reached thine ears, grandfather ! said Thrasilos. A mountain seems to have fallen, Otanes replied, and the thought that Zeus might have felled one to block the strait of Eubœa against the waves that Poseidon would raise up against Aulis, encouraged them to believe in their safety. And if the peak that fell be not enough, which one will he choose for his purpose ? Kebren asked, and Otanes answered : He will find the peak he needs among the Telethrion range, or over against Lithada. But Zeus's providence will come to naught if Æolus opens his

bladder of winds before Zeus hath time to loosen the roots of another mountain. Shall we hear the west wind when it begins ? Biote asked. But, mother, it may not begin ! cried Thrasilos. Hush, lest it should hear thee ! And just as if Biote's question had summoned the wind, it began far away. Approaching like a herd of wild oxen, said Kebren, and Biote clasped his hand. Like the phalanxes of the Persian army—so I have heard described the march of Xerxes's troops, Otanes muttered in his beard, and everybody was more afraid of the old man's speech than of the wind that was coming. It fell upon the house like a panther on an ox, but ox met panther and the wind retreated like a wild beast before a foe too formidable. I had that wind in mind, said Otanes, when I ordered the building of my house. Æolus is not easily beaten when he gives his promise, he continued, and if the strait be not blocked the wind will bring waves that will engulf Aulis. Grandfather, we beseech thee to cease prophesying ! Thrasilos cried, and Rhesos murmured in his brother's ear : It would seem that it irks grandfather that we should live after him ! Again the thunder crashed, and Kebren said : It is hard to believe that a mountain hath not fallen. A small shower of rocks may block the northern strait and we shall be safe, for Poseidon cannot bring waves over the mountains of Eubœa. The wildest night, replied Otanes, that hath been known for more than eighty years. About that time there was one that wrecked many ships in the harbour and many houses in Aulis, carrying cattle into the sea. Wolves and foxes swam in the streets, and corpses of men and women rose and sank, washed hither and thither—— Father, cried Biote, wilt cease thy tales ! But as if he had not heard her, Otanes began to tell how the oracle of Amphiaraos had prophesied that a child saved by a cradle from drowning, as he was, would live till . . . A knock at the door interrupted what the company felt to be an unnecessary tale.

The comer was Timotheus, with news that the wharves were under water and that the town soon would be if the

great wave were succeeded by another and greater. Let us go hence to the hills, whither Poseidon cannot follow us, said Thrasilos. Ye are too late for the hills, Timotheus answered. And my slaves—where are they? Kebren asked. I bade them away to the hills, master, where I said they would fare better than we on a gusty roof. Truly in a wooded dell they will fare better than we, Timotheus; but why are we not with them? And Timotheus told how a great wave had nearly broken through the door leading into the laneway. I said: Now is your chance to each the hills before the next wave comes, and they ran, men and women together. We shall lose a few, replied Kebren; even so, it were better to lose a few slaves than our own lives. We might be caught by the next wave and drown'd about the smashed doorway. There is still the outer court-yard between us and the sea, said Thrasilos, and the door is strong—No doors are strong, sir, when the sea vomits out of its very depths such a wave as nearly caught the servitude. Let us to the roof.

Grandfather, awake! cried Rhesos, and on to my back or on to father's. On to somebody's back thou must go, and no great burden wilt thou be upon it. Otanes did not answer, and afraid lest they might be in the presence of the dead none spoke or moved till Kebren came to the old man's chair, and laying his hand on his shoulder cried in his ear: Awake, Otanes, for we climb to the roof out of reach of the flood. And no answer coming from the dead man Kebren turned to his wife and sons and Timotheus, saying: He is no longer within hearing of the winds of Æolus, the waters of Poseidon, or the thunder of Zeus. We must leave him—To be washed hither and thither by the waves! cried Biote. If the waves come into the hall they cannot hurt him, Kebren answered, and it will be hard to lift him to the roof. The night is a wild one and it will be gustier before we reach the roof with his corpse. We would do well to leave him. He is beyond hurt, he repeated. Beyond hurt he may be, said Timotheus, but I hear him, though he speaks not, and he asks

that we should not leave him alone amid the waters I would not lose him till the fire consumes him on the beach, leaving his ashes to be gathered into a vase. To remain on the roof will need all our strength, said Kebren. A gust may carry him over the parapet into the courtyard, or away into Aulis. Light enough he is for the wind to do that, Timotheus answered, and without a rope to bind ourselves to the chimney-stack we should be as unable as he to keep on the roof. And Kebren, shamed by the devotion of the servant to his dead master, murmured : Since it is thy wish, Timotheus, that he should be among us whether we live or perish, bend that I may lift him on to thy shoulders. Hast got him safe ? By the ankles and wrists, Timotheus replied. Lead the way, master. After passing through the kitchen thou'l find on the right a ladder. Go up it and open the trap-door for me—a thing I cannot do, burdened as I am with the master and the rope that will bind us all to the stack. . . . I doubt not the strength of the rope, but the chimney may not be able to withstand the gust that is gathering. Gathering far away, he cried to those that were still below, but loiter not.

Biote and then Rhesos and Thrasilos climbed, to be seized in turn by Timotheus and bound securely before the house quaked and the chimney rocked. Crouch ! cried Timotheus, and afraid that the wind might lift them up and carry them over the parapet, they hardly dared to raise their heads to see what the lightning might show of ships' masts and rigging in the strait. If the chimney-stack holds we are safe ! cried Timotheus. Otanes put good stone and mortar into the stack, else we were undone. Are my sons here ? Biote cried through the briny rain. And thou, Kebren—art safe ? And having gotten answers from all three, she cried : Art thou still with us, Timotheus ? With you still, he replied, and the crooked lightning showing him with Otanes in his arms, their guess was that he waited for a lull in the wind so that he might enfold his dead master in a tarpaulin. As he did this Thrasilos began to talk to him, saying that if the wind did

not cease, and quickly, the building of a pyre on the seashore would have to be abandoned for a grave. A sorrow this will be to us all, Timotheus replied, for from long past Aulis, and even Athens, hath looked up to a funeral pyre as a sacred duty. At that moment a great gust swept down more suddenly than the others, but they withstood it, and when it passed their talk was back on the pyre and on the difficulty of getting it to burn into flames big enough to reduce Otanes to ashes. Rhesos spoke of pitch and resinous pines till the rain came down again, soaking them, and they wondered if Timotheus would open the trap-door ; but he was warned by Kebren not to do so lest the wind should get into the house and lift the roof, and themselves be buried in the wreckage. I had no thought for opening the door, Timotheus answered. On his words silence fell and they bore with the rain, which Timotheus said would cease with the dawn. Many times it slackened, but only to begin again, and hope deserting them, the cry of all was : Will the dawn never come ? The dawn cannot be far off, said Kebren, yet the crests of Mount Telethrios and Dirphys are still wrapped in clouds which the rising sun fails to pierce. We have been many hours here, and it must be day on the eastern coast of Eubœa. Yet we must have patience, he continued ; railing against the wind and the rain will not move the elements ; we are subject to them. And to encourage them he told that the night on the roof was better than the night he had suffered at the tiller off the Egyptian coast. As the ship split under me . . . A gust choked the words in his mouth, and they resigned themselves to silence and to watching for the black sky to turn to grey.

Rhesos was the first to cry : I can distinguish shapes, mother's face and thine, father. And Kebren, still holding on to the rope for safety, looked over the edge of the roof. The strait is full of broken ships, he said, destroyed by lightning and by waves. Thy losses are great, master, no doubt, Timotheus answered, but in this twilight they seem greater than they are. Kebren always sees misfortunes

twenty times augmented, Biote cried. We have escaped with our lives and have a roof above our heads. Under our feet thou shouldst say ! Kebren replied, with a watery smile. Come to the parapet again, master, and look over. Thou'l see that there is water in the laneway and in the outer courtyard, the mere dregs of the wave that nearly overwhelmed the slaves. Had the sea cast up another—— Thou canst not forget the sea's power, Timotheus. Nor wouldst thou, master, hadst thou seen it break through the doorway. And the danger is not over yet ; the strait is still boiling. Thy counsel that we should betake ourselves to the roof was wise, Timotheus, for had the great wave come again we should have been safe ; the house would have withstood the shock if nothing else did. But I would know the damage done, wherefore descend and report if we must remain on the roof under a tent, or if the house stands firm. . . . A few minutes later Timotheus's head appeared, and he cried to them that there was some water in the house but not enough to oblige them to keep to the roof ; moreover, some slaves had returned and he had set them to work with pails and brooms. It will be harder to get Otanes down the ladder than it was to get him up, he continued. Slide him carefully into my arms lest a sudden shock should pitch me from the rung I am standing on. Rhesos and Thrasilos lent their aid, and Biote at the foot of the ladder watched the slaves working a main till she remembered that the sea might have penetrated as far as her own workroom, destroying her tapestries ; and having much regard for them, she sent her maids to rescue them from the water.

As the women left the hall she was about to follow them, but stopped reverently to see Timotheus place Otanes in his chair. Set him free from the tarpaulin, which he needs no longer, she said, and the casual words compelling her to think of him as freed from all care of what might happen to Aulis, she wondered how it was that Rhesos should be eager to question the slaves who had returned from the hills as to the

number of wrecks in the strait, learning from one that the worst had happened where the strait widened out into almost open sea, and from another that the ships which had drifted and split upon the rocks would provide a great pyre for the burning of the dead man. Burnt, Kebren was heard to mutter, by his own ships ! Now, if it had been the ships of the merchants of Salami ! said Timotheus ; and after listening a little while to the wrangle that Timotheus's remark had set up, Kebren left the hall abruptly, and the voice ceased in dismay, part of the slaves' news being that the councillors intended to come to consult with Kebren and Otanes as to what might be done to provide shelter for the folk till the flooded streets were dry enough for them to return to their homes. Otaies's hand, always ready to give to the poor, can be lifted no more for giving, Biote said, and I know not when Kebren will return ; not till late in the evening, I am sure of that. Wherefore return to your work ; my sons will carry the news to Aulis of Otanes's death. A day of misfortunes for many, said a slave, for sculptor and architect as well as for us. My temple hath been wrecked by the wind ? cried Thrasilos. Speak ! Not wrecked, sir ; damaged only. The wind got in among the scaffolding and rocked it till a wall fell, said another, and Biote did not dare to answer that the wall could soon be rebuilded ; whence the money was to come to build temples and statues she did not know. But she answered her sons' questions quietly all that day, like one without trouble upon her mind, saying at last : Your father hath not yet returned. Not yet returned ! they repeated, and she heard in their voices an echo of her own dread that Kebren might have drowned himself for grief of his old friend.

CHAPTER XVII

So thou hast returned to me at last ! she cried. Why at last, Biote ? A fisherman saw thee rowing in the twilight towards

the Lelantus, she answered. But not to drown my grief in it, great though that be. He saw me rowing to Eubœa to ask Mnasalcas at what spot the rafts bringing down logs for the burning could unload easily. And the ashes ? If thou wouldest preserve his ashes, Biote, Rhesos will design a vase, but the folk would like him buried in a quiet corner of the valley whither they could go at eventide. A few of his old friends might choose a grave, she answered, but Aulis would give a great burning to its greatest man, wherefore we must submit to the indignity of a crowd, pedlars, acrobats, fortune-tellers, hucksters. As I pass their eyes will follow me, and their thoughts will be : Unmoved she passes ! Or mayhap their thoughts will be busy with tales about me, striving to discover reasons for thy long absence in the Euxine. I was not beguiled, Biote. But as if she had not heard him, she continued : Daridœus was here, prophesying that houses would fall along the Hellespont ; he went away to calm the earthquakes with prayers and libations, and it is said, and falsely, that I followed him. Father would have made this falsehood plain to thee, Kebren, but now he is gone there is nobody to defend me. Truly thou'rt overwrought, Biote ; I barely know thee for the woman who hath lain in my arms these twenty years. Such moods should leave no remembrance, she replied. I am afraid of Leto, for she hath a tongue for scandal and a wit to create it. But Leto is thy friend ; what hath befallen that thou shouldst mistrust her ? Seek not to follow my thoughts, Kebren ; tell me, rather, if Mnasalcas is willing that his daughters should wed our sons, knowing that we have lost ships and have spent much money on a temple. True it is that he spoke of the temple to me, saying that Otanes must have been a very rich man. And Leto—will she be at the burning ? Biote asked. Mnasalcas was frowning over her eagerness to take her daughters with her, Kebren answered. Come, let me think on her words. All Chalkis and Aulis will be there, she said, and I too and my girls with me. Nor will thy frowns, Mnasalcas, keep us

within doors. Thou hast caught her speech exactly, Kebren; I can hear her voice in thine. And I must make a brave show; whatever my grief may be I must curb it and meet her at the pyre. Remove that empty stare from thy face, Kebren, and understand me when I say that Leto and I must be seen walking as friends, she with dry eyes, I with wet. Why must thou be seen walking with Leto? And why must ye walk, one with wet eyes and the other smiling? I did not say that Leto should walk smiling by my side. Ask me no more questions, Kebren; I have told all I know, wherefore go to thy business leaving me to mine, and on the day of the burning let thy coming be not later than noon, for I would hear thee praise thine old friend. But should Mnasalcas stop Leto and her daughters from coming to Aulis—— He will not do that, Biote, so fixed is her mind on letting Aulis see the beautiful children she can bear despite his roughness. I pray that thou judgest her rightly, Kebren, for Rhesos must go away with Earine in the first ship that sails. She is his inspiration. Rhesos was a sculptor before he knew her, said Kebren. I cannot follow thy thoughts, Biote; I know only fragments of thy mind and my guesses of the rest are vain. Let my mood pass unquestioned, she answered, and give thy thoughts to thy portion of the work that awaits us: the building of the pyre.

There will be eating and drinking in this house; all that is to my charge. Three unhappy days have still to unwind themselves. No more have I to say. To thy work, Kebren, I to mine. When Kebren had left her she was glad of the embroideries that awaited her hands, and when the shroud was finished, and the tired women left the workroom to prepare the body with oils and spices, she said: We have forgotten the flowers for the bier, and the garlands for the oxen that will draw the wain to the pyre. It would indeed be a disgrace if we let the wain go without flowers, the women answered, and they returned with weary fingers to the

weaving of garlands. Kebren came with a bunch of keys, and Biote told him that the manuscripts were to be treasured ; the letters she would read and burn herself. Timotheus might choose among Otanes's clothes, and those he did not need he would give to the poor of the town. The sadness that is in old things was felt by all, and when the door closed behind Kebren the weaving of wreaths began again and was continued till the sound of harps and flutes, the harbingers of the procession, caught on their ears. Biote called to the slaves to distribute goblets on the tables and to fill them with wine from the tankards, but time was brief, only enough for the mourners to dip bread into the wine and so get a mouthful quickly to sustain them in the long day before them. The pyre cannot be lighted till what remains of Otanes arrives, said Biote, encouraging the laggards to make free with the great dishes of sausages and to carry away what they could not eat of lamb and pork, lettuce and cabbage. And then leaving the hall they formed into procession, those who were seeking a piece of honey cake being reminded at last that the procession was at the end of the laneway. We can easily outstrip the oxen, lady, they answered, and will overtake them before the last houses are passed. We shall see thee at the pyre ? Later in the day, she replied wearily, when the pyre collapses, tier after tier, under the great heat. And lying down she slumbered and waked, falling at midday into a long sleep.

Kebren ! she said, rising from her couch. So it is thou ! I am tired. Little sleep there was for anybody last night. I am tired, she repeated, yawning. The pyre was lighted early, Biote, and is now burning splendidly ; but if thou'rt too tired to walk thither ? . . . She replied, still yawning, that she was not, and they fared, content to walk in silence, Kebren rehearsing his funeral oration all the way. If I could but speak it on that rock ! he said to himself, his eyes falling on one by the roadside. And surprised at the sudden halt in their journey Biote asked

for a reason, and not getting a sufficient one her thoughts fixed themselves on the rough road they were following. The ruts should have been filled in, she said to herself ; the wain passed from one jolt to another, and tears came into her eyes when she remembered that it mattered not to the dead man whether the road was smooth or rough. It struggles, she continued, through rocks and sandy hollows, looping round the green wood, and Kebren asked her if she had forgotten that it was among yon pines and plane-trees that Rhesos had gone to meet Aphrodite. And got one of Mnasalcas's daughters instead, she answered. On coming round the spit of land he pointed to a great trail of smoke leaning towards Eubœa, saying : Mnasalcas must have sent some newly felled trees, full of sap. A few stragglers in front of us and not one behind us, said Biote. We are the last, half-an-hour after the others. What can have brought thee to a standstill before that rock, Kebren ? It was but a minute, Biote—— It was five ! However, never mind ; we are here.

What numbers of people among the rocks and along the shore, she continued, staring as if they had never seen the sea before, thinking nothing of the pyre. They can't all be from Aulis, for we know everybody in Aulis, and not a single face do I recognise among the crowd. Look, Kebren, look ! Cockers, Biote, he answered, and she asked : Cockers—what are they ? Men who train cocks to fight. Is there going to be a fight, then ? Yes ; they are making a cock-pit, building it out of stones from the beach. The cry goes round of a funeral or a wedding, he added, and forthright thieves, jugglers, soothsayers, rope-dancers—all collect. Look yonder ; whores from Corinth, I will swear it, though I cannot hear their voices, bargaining with a pedlar. Hey, Leto ! he cried. And where are our daughters-in-law ? Daughters-in-law to be ! Biote replied, as they made their way round the cock-pit. How long hast thou been here ? Kebren asked. Not many minutes, Leto answered, come over on the last raft

carrying the logs that thou and Mnasalcas spent so much time choosing yesterday, smearing them with tar and resin to make a quick burning of Otanes. Here all by yourselves ? Kebren continued, perceiving Melissa and Earine. Even so, for Mnasalcas went off early this morning crying that he must go at once to the pyre. And here we are at the pyre, and Mnasalcas as usual is out of sight, out of hearing, and we out of his mind as fully as the wife of the man yonder watching the three women in Corinthian shawls bargaining with a pedlar for rings and amulets that will help them in their craft. He is now fastening a shawl with a brooch . . . clever pedlar, he hath sold his brooch ! and the three punks are now free to test the power of their amulets on whom they please, upon Mnasalcas, perhaps. Dost suspect him of wantoning, Leto ? asked Biote. No, I do not suspect him of wasting money on such trash as over yonder, but half my life is spent in asking where he is and trying to make sense of the answers I get. The last time I saw him, says one, was here . . . or yonder . . . and if it was in neither place it was between the two. The last time I saw him, Kebren began—— The same willingness in thee as in another to throw dust in the eyes of a married woman come in search of her husband ! Toying no doubt he is with a mischief, and there are plenty of them about. Still jealous of Mnasalcas ! said Biote. Were he in the middle of one I shouldn't make a bawl about it, Leto continued, for things are not to-day as they were twenty years ago. Then I was a jealous wretch, I will admit it, and knowing me well in the days I am speaking of, Biote, thou'lt vouch for the truth of my words. Kebren told thee that he met my husband this morning ? Yes, Leto ; and I can tell thee that yesterday thy husband and mine were in the woods and the woodyard, and that the sun wasn't over the mountains when they were unloading rafts and helping to build the pyre. But it is not of yesterday nor this morning, but of this noon that I would have speech of my husband's whereabouts ! cried Leto. Thou speakest as if thou wert eager to see him,

said Biote, yet when you come together all the eagerness will pass. Well, what if it do ? Leto answered. One can't always have a burning to speak to one's husband about ! The last time I saw Mnasalcas, said Kebren, he was over yonder among the rocks shouting to the people by the pyre, telling them that if the wind changed they would all be scorched and burnt up in clouds of ashes, like poor Otanes himself. All burnt up if the wind changes, like the corpse itself on the pyre ? cried one of the cockers . Grinnus, thou hast no mind to risk thy life on the chance that the wind remains steady, and all for the drachmæ at the bottom of thy cap ? Not I ! said Grinnus. Nor I ! Nor I cried two other men of their company, and quickly the cocks were stuffed into their baskets and the hens into theirs, and the men made off, followed by many people crying that their money should be returned to them, the cockers shouting back : Think no more of cock-fighting till the burning is over. We shall be ready to give you the worth of your money then in a cock-pit under the shade of plane-trees in the cool of the evening. A few more cries were heard : Return us our money ! After the burning ! After the burning ! the cockers shouted. The great crowd heaved, the men disappeared, and the subscribers to the fight felt they had been duped.

It was well I did not subscribe five drachmæ for the fight, Biote, said Kebren. They got three out of me ! cried a passer-by, and another reckoned his loss at four drachmæ, saying : That was a pretty excuse for flight, and they off with the swag and no cock killed or wounded. And they're right ! cried a man with a ladder ; this is no place for a pitch. His monkey was picked up ; his dog followed, and he staggered under the weight of the ladder, so great was the heat. Kebren, thou'l^t do well to hasten in search of Mnasalcas, said Biote. Leto will not be quiet till he is by her side. This is no day for running, Kebren answered. My beard is full of sweat ; and drops hang from thine upper lip, Biote. And thou, Leto, thy full bosom must be like a sponge. Like two

sponges, said Biote, and the girls laughed, for this time their mother had been stricken with words that she could not answer. We, too, are full of sweat, said Melissa, and our shifts could be wrung out as if we had gone for a dip without divesting. O, for a dip in the sea, for another swim from Chalkis to the green wood ! they muttered to each other. Kebren, when thou hast a sight of my husband, cried Leto, tell him to await us by the booth of the pythoness. Now, girls, said Biote, look round, for there's a great deal that's worth seeing collected to-day on this shore, visitors from all parts, acrobats, dancers, fortune-tellers—all wondrous clever. Yonder is a man walking on stilts. Pick your way through the crowd and watch him, learning how he manages to keep erect.

Now they are out of sight, Leto, tell me—hast heard Mnasalcas speak of the marriages of our sons and daughters ? As well might I ask if thou and Kebren speak of the marriages, Leto answered. Of what else should we speak ? and of Otanes's death and the pyre burning under him, and of our losses ? Ah, so he speaks of the storm, thinking, perhaps, that the marriages should be postponed till my sons return successful, having built many temples and carved many statues ? I have heard him hint, Biote, that it would be wise to wait a little till thy sons return with pockets full of money ; he could forgo the wreaths. And what answer madest thou to him, Leto ? That I would as lief have my girls go away with their lovers. And did he not check thee ? He tried to, but was silent enough when I gave him a picture of what the house would be with two girls whining for their lovers, neglecting their meals and caring only for solitary places among the willows along the banks of the Lelantus. Not a happy day awaits thee or me, Mnasalcas, I said, till Melissa and Earine come back with grandchildren. And to those wise words what answer did he make ? That the house would be lonely enough when the girls were gone and nobody in it but our two selves ; to which I said that those who plant

fruit-trees must wait for the fruit and keep their fingers from pinching the buds. Girls wish to see new faces, Mnasalcas, I said. Good Leto, cried Biote, thou couldst not have spoken words nearer to my heart, and for them I'll tell thee a secret. In the middle of our courting Kebren asked for a year's leave to wander before he settled down for life. No sooner is she married, said Leto, than a woman sets the tune of her life, by a single act establisheth her rule, which is never taken from her afterwards ; but one cannot cheat nature, Biote, and Kebren got three years' way from home trading in the Euxine. Thou'rt thinking of a quest for the Golden Fleece, Leto, and believest the fleece to have been the gold of a woman's hair, a Calypso from Sinope and Dioscurias ; but Kebren was always a chaste man ; he returned as he went. And thou, Biote, where was thy jealousy all the time he was away and no word from him ever coming to reassure thee ? If I were jealous it was from spite, Biote answered. And in thy jealousy there was no wish to avenge thy wrongs ? No wrong was done to me, Leto, or barely a wrong. Perhaps I was the wrong-doer in forbidding Kebren to indulge for a year in his ambitions. So thy husband went to the Euxine in search of the year of grace that thou wouldest not grant him, and a little plagued thou art at times by the secret thou hast told me. No, not plagued by it, Leto, for were that time to be lived over again, I should act as I did act. After ten years of marriage, Leto replied, we begin to think that the days are going by and we at a standstill or worse, gathering none of the fruit or the flowers ; our thoughts begin to betray us. But thou'st told me a secret ; I'll tell thee one in return. I had a lover, and an ardent one, who begged me to meet him in Corinth ; and feeling that I must do something, I consented—

Mother, mother ! cried Earine. Mother ! cried Melissa. The motley on top of the stilts kicked a little boy so badly that he was carried off with something broken in him. But you had no ears for the brawling that began, so busy were

you exchanging secrets ! The crowd would have killed the acrobat, said Earine, if his friends had not got round him, crying that if he hadn't struck at the boy, who had hold of his stilts, he would have had a fall that would have broken his back or his neck. And did the acrobat mount his stilts again and continue his dancing ? Biote asked. I know not, Earine answered, but we'll run and find out and leave you to your secrets. . . . Thou wert telling me about a night spent in Corinth, Leto, a man sharing a room in a tavern with thee. Share a room we did, but not a bed. And why not a bed, since thou wentest thither on a fair understanding ? A man doesn't love a woman after he hath had her, Biote, not with the same love, at least, as he did before. A quiet, dispassionate friendship, yes, but the tremble of the hand and the greed of the lips are lost for ever. As with a man, so it is with a woman. But thou hast not told me, Leto, why thou shouldst have chosen Corinth for such a mood of chastity. Canst give no reason for this mood ? There was something in his face I didn't like. Leto, dost take me for an innocent ? I kept him sighing and craving for ten years, said Leto. Pooh ! Pooh ! Biote replied. But thy girls are returning to us, edging their way through the crowd to relieve our anxiety, mayhap, for the poor boy that got beaten with a stilt. . . . His howls were for fright rather than pain, mother, said Melissa. And the motley on stilts—is he up again and dancing ? Yes, he is on his stilts, striding over the heads of the crowd in search of other customers, his pitch taken by two dancers. One throws a ball high into the air, the other catches it whilst dancing, and every step falling in time with the music he throws it back again to his companion, who catches it unfailingly. But here comes a wain bringing sightseers from Tanagra.

Wagoner, cried Leto, thou'rt not going to drive over the good people of Aulis, come to celebrate the funeral of their well-beloved townsman ? My company would witness the fire, lady. Witness the fire ! Canst thou not see it from the

hillside ? Wouldst push me, sir, under the wheels of the wain ? she continued, turning to a man standing beside her. Lady, the fault is not with me, the stranger answered ; I, too, am being pushed. Hal'oo, wagoner ! Draw in thine oxen ! Lady, he added, turn ng to Biote, fear nothing. We are all on thy side, even to . on drunkard standing in front of the wain willing to be crushed, crying : Do not push ! Do not push ! And now, sir, said Leto, since thou hast saved us from the wain wilt tell me the way to the pythoness ? for my daughters would have t cir fortunes told by her. No more than natural it is for them to wish their fortunes told, lady ; but it needs no pythor ess to tell them, for their faces are their fortunes, among many other things. Sir, we asked not for compliments, but for t ie way to the pythoness's tent. Pardon me, lady ; I meant no harm. The pythoness's tent will be found fifty yards higher up on the hillside. . . . Now, Melissa, now, Earine, take my hands and let us go in search of the pythoness and your lovers ; mayhap we shall meet them by the tent. Mother, give us time to draw breath ! said Earine. A goblet of wine and water would be welcome indeed to me and to Melissa. And to me, said Biote. And to me, said Leto. I could drink a bottle of Chian—well watered, for wine is heating. Mother, speak not of drinking till the goblets are at our lips ! cried Melissa. And talking of the flaming sky above them and of the flaming pyre, the heat of which seemed greater than ever, the logs being now all aflame, the women pushed their way through the crowd till they came to the Barker—a man standing on a stool calling to the people to have their fortunes revealed to them by the pythoness. Let us listen to the Barker, said Leto.

I see many women in the crowd, cried he, and wherever there are women there are thoughts of : Will he love me ? and wherever there are men it is the same question : Will she love me ? All lovers seek to know the future, and the pythoness will tell it to you and many other things. She will tell men and women of distant relations they have not heard

of for years but whose money they will inherit. If they be childless they will be told what must be done to obtain children, and if they do not wish for children the pythoness will tell them how to escape from children. All kinds of knowledge are sold here and at a fair price. The beauty of youth can be given to the middle-aged. Pills can be purchased that will stir sluggish hearts to love. Every man should provide himself with a phial, for none can say when this will not be needed ; and women, too, should procure a phial, knowing well they will need help to bring their lovers to their sides, ready for them and love. Are there no women eager to look into the future and learn of the children that Fate hath allotted to them ? Enter, lady. Give me thy hand so that thou mayst not trip over the step, and I'll hold thy shawl lest it catch on a nail. Come, ladies, enter and hear what your fortunes shall be in children, in drachmæ, and perhaps in golden talents. Enter, he repeated, his eyes fixed on Earine. The man speaks well, said Earine. Speaks well, lady ? None better, for I am confidant of the pythoness and she hath the key to the book in which the future is written. And what I tell thee she can give, and will give. Now, ladies, would you hear of the statues that Rhesos will carve and the temples that Thrasilos will build ?

He knows of Rhesos and Thrasilos ! How did he hear of them ? the women whispered together, to-day is our chance to consult one so learned. Ask, girls, said Leto, if the Gods will give you husbands at once ; and later grandchildren for us, she added. And the girls were about to enter when a young woman came out of the tent brawling with a man for having let her sit under a lamp that was leaking. We were waiting our turn, she cried, and it was not until ten people had passed before us that I felt a drip upon my shoulders and said : What is this ? and the answer I got was that the lamp above me must have been leaking. Why did he not cry that it was leaking ? Why let me sit under it for so long ? Here is my shawl ; I ask everybody to look at it—the embroidery

I have been working on for the last three months ruined by a dripping lamp ! Had I seen that the lamp was dripping, the man began—— Seen that the lamp was dripping ? It was thy business to see if the lamp dripped before I sat under it ! Melissa and Earine looked at their shawls and asked if all the lamps were dripping, and he Barker answered them that no lamp was dripping in the tent. Well, then, how came my shawl to receive all this oil ? It's soaking ! Seek a herbalist, lady, who will sell thee a pot on that will take out the oil. To think, he added to those about him, that the pythoress should lose half her earnings or that a lamp was broken or leaked ! The lamp hath been mended, he cried ; you have nothing to fear now. Come up, my good sirs ; you would have your fortunes told, and you shall have them told, and favourably.

The shouts grew fainter as Biote and Leto and the girls struggled through the crowd, and coming fortuitously upon Rhesos and Thrasilos, they were conducted by the young men to the rock selected by Kebren for the delivery of his funeral oration:

CHAPTER XVIII

No, Mnasalcas, I will not give ear to the notes of the bugle calling the people round the high rock—— A few words, Kebren, will be enough to finish the day plausibly, for in the midst of their sports and games the multitude did not forget that at the close of day thou wouldest tell them from the high rock the story of two men who worked together for twenty years, not two ropes but two strands of the same rope. Two strands of the same rope, Kebren repeated ; verily it was that, and what greater story is there to tell ? I hear it when I look into my heart. But a great story needs a great teller, such as I am not and never shall be, least of all at this moment, whilst Otanes is burning on the beach. This is a time for

dazed grief, not for words clear and precise, harmonious to the ear. Spare me, spare me, Mnasalcas ! Speak for me. I have naught but grief in my head for a friend who cannot be replaced. Grief takes us unawares and we are rocked like trees in a wind ; branches are broken, roots cracked, and then all becomes calm again. Yesterday whilst working with the lumbermen in the woodyards thou must have thought me cold and indifferent. On the rafts, too, I had other things to think of besides my personal grief, and the building of the pyre was a distraction. But now there is no distraction ; I am alone with my grief and without words to tell it. Kebren, I would address the multitude in thy place, but they are crying for thee. Hearken : We want to hear Kebren ! We want to hear Kebren ! My tears and tremblings, Mnasalcas, and the confusion of thought in which I labour will pass away, but not my grief. These paroxysms are unfortunate—Hush ! say no more, said Mnasalcas. The passers-by are listening to thee. We must not keep the people waiting. Hasten thy steps. And pressing forward without considering the convenience of anybody, the crowd behind them muttering : Kebren and Mnasalcas ! the twain arrived at the rock. Now, to it, Mnasalcas. Say all that thou hast said to me, and what thou pleasest. Reconcile me to the multitude. Hearken : We want Kebren !

Kebren, cried Mnasalcas, cannot speak to-day ; overwhelmed with grief he begs me to speak for him. The crowd consented with one accord to listen, and when Mnasalcas had concluded his speech and climbed down from the rock, he almost fell into Kebren's arms. Art satisfied with my telling ? he asked. No, Kebren answered ; thou hast the instinct of truth in thee, but no man tells another man's story. There is nothing for it but that I speak. Then go to it at once, said Mnasalcas, or the crowd will disperse ; say to them what thou hast said to me. Whereupon Kebren climbed to the rock, and when the cheers that saluted him had subsided, he said : When I came to this rock, fellow-townsmen, to praise

my lifelong friend, Otanes, I was beside myself with grief and fears for the future, and perforce had to ask Mnasalcas to tell my story, which he did as well as a man can tell a story that is not of his own flesh and blood ; and his telling of it having helped to rescue me for a time from grief and a confusion of thought, I have returned at his advice to tell you that my father was a fishmonger in Athens and that I served in the shop until, exasperated by my bad chopping of fish and a trick I had of reading the Iliad whilst customers waited, he lost patience. Betake thyself to the theatre, he said ; thou hast a fine resonant voice and a good presence, and for these qualitics wilt be hired. The parts of messengers were always handed to me, for I looked like a man who would be good on a journey, and I played them, hoping to be given kings. But for one reason or another—lack of talent or lack of luck, I know not which—I remained a messenger till my father died, leaving me not the large fortune I had expected but a pittance that obliged me to look out for a means of getting my livelihood ; and no career seeming to suit me better than that of a rhapsodist, I paid for a passage to Cnidus. We were to loose at daybreak, but at midnight a voice spoke in my ear, saying : To Aulis ! To Aulis ! and believing the voice to be that of a God (for what else could it be ?), I trudged in the clear moonlight across Attica without any due comprehension of the design of the God, inventing from time to time reasons for the journey, saying to myself : The God sends me to the bays of Aulis so that I shall be able to answer any questions that might be put to me by a caviller, for there are always cavillers among audiences. The trudge was a long one, and I arrived so weary that I could not pursue my way into the town but lay down on the sand, and when I awoke I met Otanes and Biote, my wife that was to be.

All these circumstances will be found in the different versions of the story that have reached your ears and that have been repeated by you and will be repeated again by your children, till the story is transformed, perhaps for better,

perhaps for worse, and I would have been pleased to let the story be as you yourselves have invented it and will continue to invent it, were it not for the honour of Otanes, to whom the Aulis of to-day owes its being. When the Greek fleet sailed from our bays Aulis was a great town or city, trading with all the islands of the Ægean and the Greek cities on the southern shores of the Euxine. But everything rises and falls, and soon after the fall of Troy Aulis drooped into a long decline, without hope of resurrection, till the father of the man who is burning yonder built a great ship. Few, if any, are alive to-day whose memories go back to this ship, but you all know the ships that Otanes built ; and as I learnt these things from my friend I doubted no longer that I was among you by the will of a God, and my belief gave me strength, courage and perseverance to keep our trade out of the hands of the Salamis merchants—a great design projected to ruin us. We came out of this war poorer by many cargoes and some ships, for we had to hazard a great deal to win in the end ; and having won, we were overjoyed, for we saw Aulis richer and more prosperous even than she was when the fleet assembled in the bays. Otanes trusted me and I trusted him, and our mutual trust helped us both. On looking back I recognised the will of the God in giving me Biote, Otanes's daughter, for a wife, whereby I became his associate and accomplice in all his enterprises. I often said I did well to obey the summons of the God that spoke in my ear, and my self-congratulations were not seldom when I returned from the sea and learnt that my first son was a great sculptor and my second an architect worthy of his brother's genius. From Phidias and Kallikrates they learnt their trades. You knew all this before by hearsay ; you know it all now by word of mouth ; and believing myself to be in some small measure if not the accomplice the instrument of the God, chosen for the redemption of Aulis, the idea came to me, or I would say came to all of us, that before leaving Aulis my sons should build a temple of thanksgiving for the gifts of the Gods. On this

point we were all agreed : that a temple should be built by my son Thrasilos containing a statue carved by Rhesos—but to what deity ? Opinions were divided, some judging that we owed a temple to Poseidon, others being in favour of Aphrodite, and striving to propitiate both deities, we decided that the temple should be built on the hill known as Heros half-way up the valley. You know all these things and circumstances ; you are part and parcel of them with myself and with my sons ; but none of us knows why Poseidon should have raised up waves that threatened to engulf Aulis and drove two of our finest ships, the *Pandora* and the *Triton*, upon the rocks. The designs of the Gods are unsearchable.

Disasters enough these were but if Otanes had lived they would not have mattered. With his wisdom to guide me I should have had strength to build new ships and to discover new sources of trade. But without Otanes I am without light. All the light I had was borrowed from him, and now that he is taken away I shall fade into darkness. I am afraid of the future, for alone I am nothing. Our lives were as two strands of the same rope. But I would include Mnasalcas, who was also our associate ; three strands made the rope, and now one strand is broken. Yes, I am afraid of the future ; Otanes will never be replaced by me or by Mnasalcas or by any other man in Aulis. I am sorry for Aulis and I weep for my friend. The love of two men who have worked together year after year for a definite end, each dependent upon the other, is greater than the love a man can bear for a woman, though she be his wife or his mistress. His children, even, are small compared with this love. Nothing can recompense me for Otanes. I am but a darkened moon, the sun having been withdrawn. Go now to your games ; leave nothing unfinished ; and when evening descends return home with thoughts of him whose bones we shall collect to-morrow when the embers are cold.

His hands went to his face to hide his tears or to dash them aside, and he could not answer Mnasalcas, who sought to

detain him, but moving on blindly he met Biote and took her in his arms. I have heard thee speak of my father Kebren, thy dead friend, and I prayed the while that some echoes of thy voice might reach him in the underworld, for they would have consoled him for leaving me and thee and our sons and all he had ever seen and heard and known or cared to know. I prayed that he heard thee, for hearing thee he would know that his love was not wasted on a profligate, a self-seeker. He never doubted thee. I can speak no more, Kebren. Let us never speak of Otanes again but think of him ; he will be always in our hearts. I can speak no more, she repeated. We must follow the others. Send Leto to me. . . . Leto, call to Mnasalcas ; say that thou wouldest not leave Aulis without lifting thy heart in prayer to a man who hath done so much for Aulis, and where canst thou do this so well as in the temple partly destroyed ? Thou understandest me, Leto ? I am stricken with grief, but I think of my son Rhesos, and thou hast in mind thy daughter Earine. Be sure of thy words ; Mnasalcas approaches. Our way home is a long one, said Mnasalcas ; we have a league to walk—— I would not return before seeing the temple, damaged though it be, Leto interjected. Come, the evening is but beginning and will be followed by a moonlight bright as day. And I will take Melissa and Earine in my charge, said Biote. Mnasalcas hesitated, but for shame lest his mistrust of Biote should be perceived by the others, he allowed Kebren to lead him over the ridge down the valley towards the temple. Plan against plan ! Biote said to herself, and remembering with satisfaction that the girls chattering by her side had never strayed from the stead among the hills farther than the Euripos, she continued : They will not need much persuasion to go away with my sons, to marry them in Cnidus, in Mitylene, Rhodes, Cos, Syracuse—no matter where ; so long as they go away together all will be well, but let them remain and the stead will be as unwelcome as Hades, as Leto knows. . . . Slender indeed are their hands, fair are their fingers, yet without a

ring upon them, and I have rings in abundance and necklaces and ornaments brought from over seas by Kebren. Now, how will these girls seem to themselves when folded in my shawls ? And her plan now entirely shaped in her mind, she recalled to them a promise made long since to show them the treasures Kebren had brought back from distant countries.

From my store, she said on arriving at the house, you will choose some presents. Rings would look well on your fingers. Here is one of gold and green jasper that will bring thee luck, Earine, and distract Rhesos's thoughts from his modelling. Wear the ring always when posing before him, and he'll lay down his modelling tool and ask to kiss thy fingers. Try on this little scarf, Melissa, and one of these days, when we have more time to talk about pleasant matters, I'll tell thee a story about it. To-day we have only time to examine the rings. Here we have a satyr carved on an agate, dancing. Look at him and admire his joyousness. He hath come from some rich man's house carrying with him a stolen drinking-cup. Earine asked if satyrs stole things, and Biote answered : The best trap to catch a satyr is the wine-trap, and a drunken satyr makes merry a meal that would have gone sadly without him. But forget the satyr for a moment so that you may give all your thoughts to these bracelets and armlets. Armlets you must have, and here are a number, plain gold ornamented with lions' heads, two for Melissa and two for Earine. Reach out your arms. . . . However fine a wrist, it looks slenderer with a bracelet upon it and the best-turned elbow needs an armlet. A well-furnished toilet-table attracts a husband to his wife ; it flatters him that great money hath been spent for his pleasure. Double-edged are these combs ; I press them upon thee, Melissa ; and to my fingers comes a carven ivory which is for thee, Earine. Trinkets, hairpins and hair bands—choose, I beg of you, for the more you take the more secure my plans. Earrings neither of you wear, I perceive, and here are some to match the armlets, gold wire twisted into a hoop, ending in lions' heads. Now,

which trinket is to your fancy ? We are a little bewildered by the profusion, Earine answered, but she chose timidly a bronze mirror atop of a statue of Aphrodite in the form of a caryatid, and Biote approved her choice. It comes to thee by right, she said, for thou art beautiful as Aphrodite herself in thy hinder parts, so my son tells me—at which the girls laughed, Biote joining in their laughter, Earine at last putting her back to the wall and refusing to leave it till Biote said : Come, we have had enough laughter. I see you casting covetous eyes on the silken robes woven at Cos, and though Aphrodite hath no need to hide herself behind silks, sometimes a little hiding exhilarates a husband. You see how careful I am to think of you ? This lozenge pattern is as pretty as any I know—gowns to slip on after leaving the couch, gowns to meet friends in, to wear whilst sipping wine and telling scandalous stories. Yes, they are for you, some for Earine and some for Melissa—there must never be jealousy between you. And leaving the girls to enfold themselves in the silks, each exhibiting herself to the other, Biote wandered round the room, returning with scarves from Carthage in one hand and hats which would protect their necks from the sun in the other.

We are grateful to thee, Biote, said Melissa, and look forward to the day when it shall be our right to wear the rings and the bracelets and the scarves thou hast given us. And are you divided as to the date of your marriages ? Biote asked. Not divided, said Melissa ; but last night I said to Earine : Our lovers will never love us better than they do to-day, and she answered me : They will never love us better, but will they love us as well ? Do I report thee truly, Earine ? Earine, without answering, picked up a lyre and sang :

Numerous as doves from a dove-cote rising
 Rise my dreams, but never as doves return they ;
 Darkening all the skies with their wings they wander,
 Lost in the darkness.

Wherefore hasten, dream of my heart, O hasten
 Homeward, lest too late to my heart returning
 They shouldst find there only the down and broken
 Shells of the fledgelings.

Aphrodite must have put that song into thy mind, Earine. It came to me unsought, said Earine, and may have come at the bidding of Aphrodite ; I have not sung it for years. Aphrodite sent you to my sons, Biote continued, wherefore we must believe you under her protection. But you have not forgotten how your father's face darkened when I asked him if I might take you in my charge ? He was afraid to allow his daughters out of his sight, having in mind the losses we have suffered in the Euripos, the money we have spent on the temple, and of all, the fortunes that may have passed from us in the Aegean. Plainly he was thinking of these things when he parted from you, and would have detained you had he dared, but shame deterred him, and I gained thereby the first point in the game at which we are playing. Game at which we are playing ? the girls repeated. Yes, we are playing a game and a deep one, deeper than any we have played in our lives before, or perhaps will ever play again. Speak, then, Biote, cried Earine.

My words, it seems, come as fast as I can speak them. We must outwit your father, girls. He will strive to keep you at home, and if he have his way you will see your lovers for the last time before they depart, for depart they must, we being ruined—if not ruined, much poorer than we were a few days ago. Father is not so cruel as to separate us from the lovers a God hath sent us ! cried Melissa. Your father knows only of Gods when they fortune him, and he will say : Young youths, go away and earn much gold and silver and laurel leaves, and you shall have my daughters. But the earning of large sums of money and an acknowledgment as chief among the sculptors and architects of Greece will take many years. When they return, said Earine, they will find true hearts. Seven years change all things, Biote replied, the face of the earth as well as

a man's heart. Our hearts are not different from men's hearts, the girls protested. Man's life and woman's life are moulded by time, said Biote. We scatter seed over the tilth and the seed springs up and is harvested and another crop begins. Girls, I would have you consider well the importance of the moment we are now in : whether I can get you away with your lovers. Get us away against our father's will ? Earine asked, when we would wander with Rhesos and Thrasilos and play at love under the forest boughs, hearing of their success at intervals when they come to tell us of their statues and temples ? We must lose a great deal, Biote replied, to gain a little. Such is the law of life, and I knew it when on my return from Eubœa with Kebren before you were born, I said : No, Kebren, if thou leavest me now to preach the worship of Helen thou leavest me for ever. For these words I seemed but a selfish woman, but he learned afterwards that I spoke wisely, and now I tell you that it hath come to you to choose to follow your lovers or to lose them for ever. Thou, Melissa, wilt not do wrong to Thrasilos if thou choosest to wait for him, but thou, Earine, should thy say be : I love my sister better than my lover, thou'l abandon thy lover to other women ; other shapes than mine will inspire his Goddesses and thy hope of immortality be lost. My shapes alone inspire him, so he hath told me, said Earine, and Melissa will not ask me to rob Greece of one of her greatest sculptors. We shall escape together from Eubœa, said Melissa. But how shall we escape ? Earine asked. I will tell thee, replied Biote. Aphrodite inspired thee to sing of her messengers, and the slave that will take to you to-morrow the presents you have chosen will bring back in his basket a pair of doves. These I shall send forth again with tidings of the next ship sailing and of the boat that will await you hidden among the reeds of the Lelantus. But should the night we leave home be moonless ? asked Earine. The stars will lead us to the water's edge should the moon fail us, Melissa answered. Brave Melissa ! said Biote. But speak

not of my project to anybody, nor whisper it even to each other, lest whispering should draw attention to you. If careless tears should rise to your eyes or sighs come to your lips, feign to have forgotten thy sons, and by feigning get them for husbands. May we tell mother? Mellisa asked. She is on our side. A better ally is silence, Biote answered. Rhesos and Thrasilos must be warned, she continued, lest they should transgress my rule of conduct. And thy husband, Biote? Kebren's mind is given over to his business, wherefore I would not embarrass him with the secret.

CHAPTER XIX

THE *Jason* will make a quick voyage to Cnidus, Kebren said. I am glad, replied Biote; Melssa and Earine are on board. What is this that I hear, Biote? Mnasalcas was averse from his daughters' marriages, she answered, till our sons returned home successful as sculptor and architect, and Leto and I, being of the same mind that delayed marriages often end in no marriages, arranged that they should escape in the *Jason*, to be married at Cnidus or elsewhere. May I ask, Biote, why I was not consulted? Mnasalcas was not consulted, she replied; we women settled it together— And settled it very well apparently! Kebren interjected. Hast thought of what Mnasalcas will say and do when he hears of his daughters' flight? Maybe he'll rage and storm, said Biote, and strike up a scandal in Aulis; but he won't get his daughters back. And canst think of anything that will prevent this scandal? Yes, Kebren, if thou wert to go to Eubœa with the story. I have known Mnasalcas for many years, Biote, but I cannot foresee him in this matter. Tell him, she said, that thou wouldest have gone to him before to warn him if thou hadst knowledge of what Leto and Biote were planning. I will go to Eubœa, Kebren replied. And to make sure that he did not delay in his counting-house she accompanied him to the wharf,

herself calling to Photius, whom she caught sight of lying in wait for passengers.

Wilt row me to the Lelantus ? Kebren asked, and Photius replied : I will, sir, and willingly, my first passenger this morning. And thy last, Photius, for I would have thee abide among the reeds the day long to bring me back to Aulis when my business is finished. That I will do, sir. Thy business is with Mnasalcas ? It is, indeed, Kebren answered, and he was about to ask Photius if it was he who had rowed Mnasalcas's daughters to the *Jason* earlier in the day ; but he restrained the words, saying to himself that it was enough for him to know that he was being rowed up the Lelantus to tell Mnasalcas a story that might end badly for them both. An unruly tongue hath Mnasalcas, and a wise counsel of Biote's it was to tell me to keep the story back till Leto was by us. Leto will share the blame with Biote, as indeed she should. Marriages being an affair of women rather than of men, I should be left out of it, and will be if I can so manage it. A lovely spring morning, Photius said, concerned by the gloom of Kebren's face. A spring day or a summer day, which is it ? Kebren asked, raising his eyes. But the mountains showing in all their happiest outlines could not cheer him, and he spoke instead of the grass not yet burnt in the plain of the Lelantus, adding : Mnasalcas's sheep feed well. At that moment a fish splashed in the river, drawing from Photius the remark : Thou shouldst have brought thy rod and line, sir ; the fish are rising. But Kebren could not think of fish, only of Mnasalcas's anger on hearing of his daughters' flight from home, and to get the first five minutes over (it would be all settled for better or worse in five minutes), he called to the boatman to push ashore, saying : These are his fields, and the time is shearing-time—clip, clip, clip, the shearer's foot on the sheep's necks from daylight to dark. Here is a drachma for thy dinner, Photius. A drachma will buy me three dinners, sir, not at "The Golden Fell" but at a wine-shop. I will be back in an hour, if that will suit thee. I cannot tell how long my business

with Mnasalcas will keep me, Kebren replied, one hour or many. But bring thy rod and line with thee ; it will help the time away if I be detained.

The clip, clip of the shearers suddenly ceased, and Kebren found the shepherds where he expected he would, under a plane-tree eating their dinner. A welcome tree at the dinner-hour at this time of the year, he said. But Mnasalcas —where is he ? At his dinner like ourselves, a voice answered; and if it be finished thou'l find him counting his fleeces in the yard. Kebren thanked them, and striding up the rising meadow he admired the frisking lambs, stopping to watch a hungry lamb running to the yoke. Dropping on his knees, he said, he butts the udder for it to relinquish its milk more quickly. A lovely spectacle the flock is always, more beautiful in the evening light than in the morning, for then the lambs lie like children beside their mothers. But yonder is Mnasalcas, by Zeus, counting his fleeces just as the shepherds predicted ! . . . Counting thy fleeces, Mnasalcas ? Working for thee, Kebren, if the storm hath left thee with enough ships to carry them ! The storm wrecked but two ships in the Euripos, said Kebren. And those in the Ægean ? Mnasalcas asked. The waves that engulfed Aulis were but local, so far as we know, Kebren answered, and Mnasalcas began to banter him about the wisdom of placing Aulis under the protection of Aphrodite rather than of Poseidon. All the Gods cannot be pleased at the same time, said Kebren, and perceiving, perhaps, that he was not receiving his friend with due cordiality, Mnasalcas changed his tone, and assuming a more genial voice and countenance asked him if any reason better than enjoyment of the spring fields in shearing-time had brought him to Eubœa. No better reason could have brought thee, he added, and never wert thou more welcome. But Kebren for the moment was out of his humour, and answered : I have come to tell of a great calamity or benefit which hath befallen thee, Mnasalcas ; which it may be I know not, for such things are often decided by a man's mood. Then confide thyself fully to me, O Kebren;

judge me not by some stupid banter, but tell forthright of the calamity or the blessing, whichever it may be, that hath befallen me. What I have to tell concerns thy wife Leto as well as thyself, wherefore I would have her hear the story with thee. Thy gloomy face alarms me, Kebren ; but let us go into the house, where we shall find Leto.

I have come, Leto, to tell thy husband what thou hast delayed to tell him, said Kebren. Of his daughters, Leto asked, who left the house at daybreak ? By Zeus and all the Gods on Olympus, cried Mnasalcas, I understand thee not at all ! Thy easy manners, and such news as this upon thy lips ! If any evil hath befallen my girls keep it not from me, for suspense is worse than the thing itself. If drowned they be in the Euripos—— Drowned they certainly are not, Leto interjected, but happier maybe than ever they were before in their lives. But the day is hot, and walking up the hillside hath brought a sweat upon thy brow, Kebren. Let me pour out wine for thee. Wine is always welcome, but thou quickenest my thirst for the story, said Mnasalcas. Sit, Leto, and tell it to me ; or wilt thou tell it thyself, Kebren, since thou hast come hither for the purpose ? I will tell it, Kebren answered, for I know it more fully than thy wife can know it. Thy daughters are on board the *Jason* with my sons. Mnasalcas stared blankly, and then repeated : On board the *Jason* with thy sons ! Nothing of this have I heard. And nothing did I hear of it, Kebren replied, until this morning. Biote . . . Biote's name could not be kept out of the story, and he dreaded that some words might be spoken that would prejudice a happy issue of it. And there might have been evil blows between the men if Leto, to avert them, had not said : Biote's charge is her sons and my charge is my daughters, and it is not thy genius, Mnasalcas, in the management of sheep and the selling of wool that would have gotten them husbands, not in Eubœa. Never didst thou speak of taking them to Athens where young men are about, nor to Corinth where all the world meets, nor to Thebes, nor anywhere, not even Aulis

itself ; and had it not been for me thou wouldest have seen them with pale faces and tears on their cheeks, crying that nothing happened in Eubœa and that they might as well be shepherdesses, for then they would be satisfied with simple shepherds and the music of sheep bells—and thou wouldest not have had that, Mnasalcas, for thou art vain of the daughters I gave thee. It seemed to Kebren that the moment had arrived for him to help Leto, who had come to his help, and he reminded Mnasalcas that Rhesos and Thrasilos were young men of whom any girls might be proud. Young men with great careers before them, he was saying, when Leto jumped in abruptly, as was her way : Mnasalcas, when he heard of the storm and the splitting of ships in the Euripos, began a fuddling talk about postponements of marriages—Fuddling talk, wife—what sayest thou ? I was not drunk at the time ! And reaching out his hand he filled his tankard again. No more shalt thou drink, cried Leto, till the talk be over. Thou hearest her, Kebren ! A man may not drink in his own house without her leave ! But now to the talk. Spit it out, lass ; what said I in my fuddling talk ? That many ships were split, Leto answered, and many more might be split in the Ægean, and that until matters were settled in Aulis thou wouldest as lief the marriages were postponed ; to which I said that I knew what a lusty girl was—— Having been one thyself, Leto, and mayhap my daughters take after thee ! For good or for evil they do, Leto replied, and having no mind to find them weeping at midday on their beds, saying they wished they were dead, I arranged with Biote that they should go away with Rhesos and Thrasilos. They will be married at Cnidus before the week is out, she added.

Hast forgotten, cried Mnasalcas, that Melissa and Earine are my daughters ? But not thine like thy sheep, Leto answered. Look after thy sheep and I'll look after my daughters ; a fair division of a family this is, and one that the Gods approve. The Gods ! Mnasalcas growled. Yes, we are talking of the Gods, Mnasalcas, and of the thread that our

lives have been tied up with ever since Kebren was bidden by a God to come to Aulis. I know that, wife ; but my daughters are on board the *Jason* with two young men—— They are indeed, and lucky to be with two such young men, the envied of Aulis, and a few years hence, perhaps, the envied of all Greece. And all this being the work of the Gods, Mnasalcas, thou wouldest come at the last to thrust thyself between the Gods and their design—and to thy great loss, perchance. Mnasalcas raised his eyes and looked at Leto. Aphrodite, she continued, is the daughter of Zeus, and Zeus may send a plague upon thy cattle and thy sheep and thy mares with mule foals running beside them, and this house he can destroy with a single thunderbolt. Happily thy daughters are now in mid-Ægean and out of harm's way ; unless perchance thou wouldest hire a ship and go after them ! She poured out some more wine, and after drinking it Mnasalcas said : It is true that when we look back upon our lives there doth seem to be a thread running through them. I apprehend and comprehend all the threads of destiny better than thou thinkest for, Leto. But thou'rt sure that they'll be married as we were ? Rhesos hath found a pattern for his Goddesses in Earine, she answered, and his love of her will do the rest. And Melissa ? Mnasalcas asked. She will wed Thrasilos, the architect. Art satisfied now with what I have done for thee and for our daughters ? I will give my vote to thee, Leto, when I have heard how all this scheming was planned. On the day that Otanes was burnt ? Not on that day, Leto answered ; our doves came hither from Aulis with letters. Now thou hast the whole story, and the evening will be well spent in writing a letter to thy daughters saying thou approvest of their marriages. Yes, Mnasalcas replied, Kebren and I will write the letter. I'll tell him what I have to say and he will put words upon it ; and now we'll drink to the healths—— No, Mnasalcas ; no more wine for thee till the dinner-hour ! The whims of wives, Mnasalcas began—— Talk not of whims, cried Leto. I have done better for thy daughters than thou couldst ever have done !

Let us forth, Kebren, said Mnasalcas. We have delayed too long. Shearers are wily, and knowing me to have a guest they may be drowsing in the shade. And whilst talking of fleeces he called to a shepherd, saying : Crook the lamb thou deemest to be at prime. A better lamb thou 'lt never eat than this one, the shepherd replied, and the two men continued their walk through the plain, Kebr en speaking of the letters he would dispatch by a fast ship to Cnidus. But will thy ship pursue the truants, asked Mnasalc is, if they have left Cnidus ? Which is not likely, Kebren answered. A ship starting at daybreak to-morrow will reach Cn dus a day or two later than the *Jason*, so the Gods themselves could not devise anything happier than what they have sent. I am thankful to the Gods, said Mnasalcas, and this year they have sent me shearers that do not idle in the shade. Listen, Kebren ; the clip, clip of the shears is golden music. But all these flocks are not thine, Mnasalcas ? It is easy to tell mine if thou hast an eye for sheep, Mnasalcas answered. Of his rivals he had many tales to tell, but the sun being now above their heads the heat of the day withdrew their thoughts from all things except the shade of a plane-tree. But sheep have gathered round it circlewise, said Mnasalcas, and may have littered it with their dung ; we must seek elsewhere. And they toiled on through the heat till they came to plane-trees free from the smell of sheep, and lay down, Mnasalcas saying : We could not pass the day pleasanter than here if my wife had not snatched the flagon from me. Thou hast a thought for the unruly snatch it was ? Kebren nodded, drawing his cap over his eyes, but he was detained from sleep by Mnasalcas, who, starting suddenly out of a doze, said : My thoughts are like gnats, fidgeting, keeping me awake. Kebren, who was of all things anxious that Mnasalcas should sleep, asked what his thoughts might be, and was answered : Of the coming together of my girls and thy boys. Was it in Aulis or in Eubœa that it happed ? And when Kebren had told that Melissa and Earine, weary of squabbling, swam over from Eubœa, determined to leave the

judgment of their rumps to the first shepherd they met, Mnasalcas turned over and shook with unseemly laughter. The story smacks of Olympus, he said. And whilst Kebren wondered what the boor could mean, Mnasalcas continued : Do not the poets tell of quarrels between the Gods and the Goddesses ? So now he doth believe that the Gods have had a hand in the making of these marriages ! Kebren said to himself, and joined Mnasalcas in his vexation that there was not a flagon of wine in the grove wherewith to drink to their very good healths. As babies they were well shapen, Kebren, and we often had them out of their cradles, Leto and I, to admire them and dispute from which of us they got their shapes. And lucky indeed are the men that have got them ; fine sport there will be under the quilts at Cnidus ! Kebren would have liked to rise to his feet and leave this unruly fellow, but sleep darkened in his eyes and he passed away into dreams—dreams that began to fade out of his mind when he awoke. Thou hast been dreaming ? Mnasalcas asked. I have indeed, Kebren answered, and he stared into the darkening leaves of the plane-trees, the life he had been living for many hours flying from him, leaving no recollection behind. The day is done, Kebren ; it must be time to go home to supper. And they returned through the warm evening, Mnasalcas with his eyes upon Dirphys—— Already losing his snow-cap, he said ; and as the words passed his lips they came into view of Leto standing by the grove of plane-trees.

Ready to scold me for keeping the supper waiting ? Not for keeping the supper waiting, she answered, but for keeping Kebren all to thyself the whole afternoon, counting fleeces and admiring sheep, or talking about shepherdesses, mayhap going in pursuit of one—not thou, Kebren, but my husband. We have been asleep in the shade, Kebren replied, the day being too hot for any such pursuits as thou hast in mind—too hot for talk even, for anything but sleep. I have been asleep, too, said Leto, idle as yourselves. Hadst thou any thought for me, Kebren, thou wouldest have brought Biote with thee.

Biote to-day is not the Biote thou knowest, Leto ; her father's death and the loss of her sons have laid her low. Her mind is not changed about the marriages ? Leto asked. Not changed, Kebren answered, but she misses her sons. And I miss my daughters ; but I am glad for their sakes that they are gone. Thou hearest, Mnasalcas ? I hear thee, wife, and was won over before we fell asleep, for I heard the story of their swimming over to Aulis to find out which had the beautifullest bottom—silly things ! I needed no shepherd to tell me that, said Leto. I told thee, wife ; but I cannot say as much to-day as I did yesterday ! An evil report that may be to a wife who hath laid a pleasant supper before thee, Mnasalcas ! said Kebren, and during the meal the talk turned upon which of the girls would give them grandchilden first. Melissa will be the first, said Leto ; she looks more like a mother. And the talk flowed on, Mnasalcas withstand ng his wife, Earine being his favourite. It is not eating you are, but talking, said Leto ; I'd have you eat like wolves that have come across a lamb on a wintry day. But that reminds me of Ajax. How is he ? And after a little talk about the wolf the servants were hailed, the table removed, and the pen put into Kebren's hand ; and the twain stood beside him, telling him what they wanted said. till he was fairly crazed. If you tell me any more I shall not be able to write anything ! he cried. Leave me for an hour, And when they returned an hour later, he said : Here is the letter you will send to your daughters ; they will be wedded before many days are out.

Wedded and bedded ! growled Mnasalcas, and a little exhilarated by the wine he had drunk he began to mutter and to talk incoherently, saying : A fine prank they played upon me, my word, a fine prank ! I have never known a finer, not even in the days gone by when— A fit of hiccupping interrupted his tale, and when he had recovered enough to resume it, he sought vainly in his mind for what he would recall, and asked, still hiccupping, how the girls had contrived their escape. Hast already forgotten that doves were our

messengers ? And when Leto told that one of their birds had arrived with the advice that Photius would be waiting at the mouth of the Lelantus, Mnasalcas burst out : Well done ! Well done ! End there is none to the pretty mis—mis—mischiefs of women ! For some seconds he was not able to speak, and Leto, fearing to have him on her hands, said : No more wine for thee to-night ; betake thee to the Lelantus. Why to the Lelantus ? Mnasalcas asked. Is not Photius's boat waiting for Kebren, she replied, and is it not thy business to see thy guest to his boat, there being many water-holes and ditches between here and yonder ? A mouthful of wine, Mnasalcas pleaded. A pail to souse thy head in is handy ! she answered. Thou seest, she is bent on sending me out with thee, Kebren, and she is right in that ; I am thy host. We would do well to be starting. And bidding Leto good-night Kebren walked with Mnasalcas down the grassy plain hardly lighted by the moon.

A dim, cloudy evening often follows a bright morning, said Mnasalcas. Thou shouldst know, Kebren replied, for thou'rt about thy fields early and late. A queer moon, Mnasalcas continued, only a blur of light in the grey sky, yet a hot night, without any air—a night when a man is as well pleased to sleep alone as with his wife. But I've heard that thou liest with thy wife every night of the year, Kebren, saving the months thou wert away in the Euxine—suspected by her then, so Leto says. Leto likes babble, Kebren replied, and anything that comes in her way is good enough for babble among friends. But I would say nothing against thy wife, Mnasalcas. Thou hast said nothing but that Leto likes babble, and very pleasant her babble is, so many people think. But what is this ? O, thou hast stepped into a water-hole ! And thou'rt not going to let me remain in it ? cried Kebren. No, no ; take my hand, but don't pull too hard or I shall be down with thee. And putting his foot against a tussock to give him strength to bear Kebren's weight whilst crawling out of the hole, Mnasalcas said : I'd forgotten that hole. Clearly thou

hadst forgotten it, Mnasalcas ! And now I would have thee give thy mind to keeping in the path in which there are no water-holes or ditches. That I will do, Kebren. Thou canst trust me ; that little mistake wil be my last. The ground is spongy about the river, and in the night a water-hole . . . Kebren understood Mnasalcas to mean that in the night a water-hole appeared like a mushroom, and he kept his eyes on the ground, giving no ear to the drunken man, who could not check his memories of shepherdesses. I shall be glad when I am in Photius's boat, he said to himself. But when they were nigh it Mnasalcas laid his hand on Kebren's shoulder, detaining him. One word more, Kebren, before we part. After twenty years of marriage a woman begins to think she'd like a bed to herself. Isn't that so ? { have no means of knowing, Kebren answered ; I have never been unfaithful to my wife. Sharing her bed as if ye were a young couple newly married ! said Mnasalcas. Keep the boat's head against the river bank, Photius, cried Kebren, and keep it steady. I have been in a water-hole—— Not my fault, not mine, Kebren ; the water-hole wasn't there yesterday. Now, Mnasalcas, step back or thou'l be in the river. . . . Push off, Photius : if he falls into the Lelantus it will be his own fault. The gaunt figure of Mnasalcas faded, and before they were in mid-stream Kebren was preparing the account he would give Biote of the great help Leto had been to him in soothing Mnasalcas for the loss of his daughters. It was indeed a great feat, he said to himself, to have persuaded Mnasalcas to write to them ; and to please Biote I'll tell her that a ship shall be chartered to bring the good news to Cnidus. The money will be well spent in saving them anxiety ; such days as these do not happen twice in a man's lifetime. I think, said the old boatman, pausing on his oars, that I catch sight of the lady Biote at the wharf's end. The boat bumped and Kebren sprang forward, taking his wife's arm.

Kebren, release me, or I shall be as wet as thou, which is to the skin—wet and muddy ! Whilst talking of Leto's good

sense and a little shepherdess, Mnasalcas forgot a mud-hole in the path. Had I a forethought of mud-holes, said Biote, I should have ordered a bath to be kept in readiness. But Mnasalcas is reconciled, I guess, from thy manner of speech. Leto, it is plain, served thee well, crooking her old ram— It is as thou sayest, Biote ; the old ram was crooked ; and in his desire to please her, Kebren omitted no incident, not even the words that were spoken under the plane-tree. Yes, but keep off my peplos ! All the same, Kebren, the twain pull together. Leto is a born shepherdess, and whosoever she married she'd have by the hind-leg before long. Mnasalcas knows it, said Kebren, and admires his wife for her skill when she puts out the crook, saying : Thou shalt not put that tankard to thy lips again ! He bleats, Biote interjected, and is resigned. We have crooked him to our ends, Kebren continued, and he told of Leto's intervention when Mnasalcas was at his worst, threatening him with the vengeance of the Gods, who would put a murrain on his sheep and cattle if he opposed their will. He'd have liked to unseal another flagon before bedtime, but she put him out of doors, saying : Thy guest first ! and on our way to the boat he explained that after a few years of marriage it is easier to let a wife have her own way, for in return she gives the man his way, which is in ninety-and-nine cases the right to look over the hedge at any little shepherdess that may chance to meet his eye, and if she hears tales told she just laughs at them. Everybody is entitled to his and her own way, he said, and the bed is a great obstacle ; we have to get under it or over it if we are to have any life of our own. What sayest thou, Kebren ? he asked, and my answer to him was that there are always hitches and hindrances, but these are different in every marriage. A man made curious with wine, said Biote, must needs know something more particular than hitches and hindrances ; he pressed thee for a plain answer ? He did ; and I told him that I lay by my wife's side every night. Not when thou wast in Egypt and Carthage, he said, detaining me, and we should

have been still discussing, my right leg on the bow of the boat and my left on the bank, if Photius had not cried : I pray thee, sir, to choose between the bank and the boat ; thou wert nearly in the river that time Wherefore I stepped into the boat, and having a few feet c f water between myself and Mnasalcas, I called to him, saying : Another time we'll argue the question out—two pi lows or one, bolster or no bolster, mattress and coverlet, Photius laughing heartily, paddling the while into midstrea n. So Photius enjoyed the wrangle ! Biote remarked, and suspecting that he had talked too openly of their bed, Kebren remained silent. As they crossed the threshold his perplexity increased, and he began to relate the story afresh, but Biote snapped in : I am not concerned to hear more of the common talk between Mnasalcas and thee. I know that men speak of things that should be sacred between husband and wife—— A drunken man is aggressive, Biote, and it is often hard to ward off his questions. Any longer delay, Kebren, in thy wet clothes will keep thee restless and sneezing in thy bed. Thou'l sleep better alone. Good-night. And feeling that he must hold himself forbidden from her bed for that night at least, he retired, and not unwillingly, to a single couch, to fall asleep in the midst of recollections of the day, and to awake missing his wife's company in the morning. He would have liked to take her in his arms, and considered a visit to her room to ask her if their separation had kept her from sleep ; but a message came from his head clerk, and he hastened to his business, remaining in the counting-house until it was time to leave it for the evening meal. At sight of Biote he at once began to speak to the ship he had dispatched to Cnidus bearing the letters he had told her of overnight. And if I had not fallen into that mud-hole, Biote, and returned wet to the skin, I would have asked thee to add a few lines to my letter ; in the morning it slipped my memory. But I did not forget to beg them to send us news of their weddings by the first ship that sailed for Aulis, or by one that might be turned out of her course. Did

I not do well ? for with news of their weddings passes our last anxiety. And of anxieties we have had enough, Biote replied. Years pass and nothing happens, and then disaster falls and is followed by more disasters. The night on the roof belayed to the stack, my dead father and all of us, in view of crooked lightning and the splitting of ships in the Euripos, was bad enough, but worse was my suffering when for the sake of Rhesos I had to attend my father's burning. All Boeotia was there and Eubœa, too, and to all I seemed an indifferent daughter, but I set at naught all rebukes and reproaches, my mind fixed on one end : the getting of Earine for Rhesos. A great silence fell, and at the end of it she rose to her feet, saying : Good-night, Kebren ; I am tired. Thou hast done wonderfully well. He was about to take her in his arms, but she restrained him. Do not ask any more of me, Kebren, for my admission of thy tact. To-morrow we'll send a message to Leto by one of her birds. Good-night. He let her go, feeling that she needed rest, and needing the same himself he lay down alone, satisfied with himself and with the world. But awaking in the middle of the night he began to see and to think differently, and in a great clearness of mind everything he had said and done was shown to him strangely distorted, and frightened he bewailed the blunder that he had been led into unwittingly. The convention of their lives was always to lie down together, but now the convention was broken. Never will she lie with me again ! Never shall I hear her cry : Kebren, art thou coming to bed ? . . . Never again ! Never again !

In the morning the fears of the night seemed to him exaggerated ; he remembered that they had been separated when he traded up and down the Mediterranean and the Euxine, and how it had often seemed to him that the resumption of their old life was like a new birth. What had happened before would happen again, and in the coming weeks he decided not to prompt Biote but to leave her to settle when he should return to her room. It would be a pity.

he thought, to miss the pleasure of the invitation ; moreover, he dared not plead with her, for were she to refuse, his plight would be worse than before ; the invitation must come from her. And it was during the next three months that he heard from Biote that love is for the young and for the middle-aged. But are we not middle aged ? cried the agonised Kebren. I am but forty-five, and thou'rt a year or two younger. With two grown-up sons, she replied. What matter our sons ? he asked. We live for ourselves. She answered that love must pass sooner or later into an affectionate friendship. And that she should hold such beliefs, Kebren said to himself afterwards, means that our married life is over and done, to be spoken of seldom and with faintly disguised contempt. The past is indeed past ! he often caught himself repeating mechanically, stopping now and then on his way to the counting-house, that he might apprehend better the changes that had come into Biote's character and temperament. More into her temperament, he said, than her character ; and his thoughts running on he came upon the belief that we bring our temperament into the world and take it out of the world with us. The years do not change us ; we remain the same, in essentials at least. About himself he could speak confidently ; sex had never controlled him as it had Biote ; and he started forth again, pondering as he walked on the influence of the bed in marriage.

A great peace-maker the bed certainly is, he said. We have had quarrels like others, but on entering our bed all differences came to an end, and we were one mind, one body, one soul. And he remembered many delightful moments, little acts of needed help as he watched her laying aside her outer garments and sitting before her toilet-table covered with essences, phials, brushes, combs, picking these up in turn, making mysterious use of them and braiding her hair into two long braids ; and all the while they talked of the happenings of the day, broken words interrupted by long silences, and at last by the silence leading into sleep. These were happy memories

and still happier were those of their awakings side by side Biote's thoughts were of her children, and there was always something to say about Rhesos and Thrasilos, and when remembrances of his business called him from her, she would say : Why should the counting-house always come between us, Kebren ? Wait a little while. And he had often waited to please her. But now he was a stranger, and his thoughts wandering on round the bed on which his life had always been centred, it came to him to compare it with the foundations of a house ; if the foundations be not secure the house, however beautiful, is in danger of falling into ruin. The comparison pleased him, but after a while he changed the simile, gathering one out of his own experience : The bed is to marriage what an anchor is to a ship. As long as the ship does not drag her anchor and the anchor holds firm, she outweathers almost any storm. But without an anchor she'll drift and go to pieces, as my life hath gone. All the strength and the security that the bed gives have been withdrawn. I am a stranger in my own house, and I leave it only to stupefy myself with figures, profits and losses. At the end of the long columns I say : Of what avail is all this searching and striving to me or to my sons ? By the carving of marbles and the erection of pillars they will earn all they need. Biote no longer tempts me to shorten my work in the counting-house so that I may walk with her along the seashore, where we have walked so often. Ah, had I an aim, had I an ambition, I might live—without much zest for life, but I could live. And very soon he was asking himself why he should continue in a vacant world when the Euripos ran idly by, ready to carry him out of it. Why live through another purposeless day of figures ? he asked, to return to a lonely bed, now worse than lonely—a bed of long dreams out of which I rise wearier than before I lay down, dreams of vain seekings. He had never met in life the men and women that he now associated with in every doze or dream, and from these there was no refuge ; only death could bring them to an end. But he could not part from Biote

without seeing her for a last time, and he dropped one by one the stones that he had gathered to help his drowning, saying : I can gather them again. But before gathering them I must think upon Otanes's words to me : when I asked him if self-destruction was permissible. It is not wise, he said, to cast off the life we are in, for the coil remains ; which means that I cannot free myself from life in the Euripos. And should I meet Otanes in the underworld, with what eyes and voice will he greet a deserter such as I am ? O man of little courage ! will be his words. And thinking of the pain that the tidings of his drowning would bring to Biote, he left the shore to beg her to say for the last time if he was excluded from her intimacy because of his brag to Mnasalcas that they lay together every night in the same bed ; and with these thoughts shaping and reshaping themselves in his mind he entered the house, to find her before her loom.

Biote, he said. . . . Why this air of fear, why this trembling hand, Kebren ? I have come, Biote, to lay my life before thee in all its simple misery, and thou canst judge if I am worthy to make an end of it. Make an end of it, Kebren ! What art thou saying ? she cried, starting to her feet. The door opened, and Leto, feeling she was not wanted at that moment, whatever the talk might be about, said : A letter from Melissa ; but I cannot stay—— From Melissa ? cried Biote. Yes, she is quick ; she is six months gone. And will give birth to a boy or a girl in three months' time ! cried Kebren. No, no, Leto ; thou canst not go. There are many things to talk about. The letter in thy hand—wilt read it to us ? Leto began to read, but very soon dissatisfied, she passed the letter over to Kebren, saying : There are many hard words in it. Even Kebren stumbled now and then over an architectural term, and when asked to replace the long words with simpler ones he did so, but middling well, as he confessed, not being learned in the erection of pillars. Did Mnasalcas read the letter to thee ? Biote asked, and Leto answered : A phrase here and there, but when he tried to fit them together

he got lost, saying : None but an architect could make much of it. Besides, what matter to us the length of the cella or the height of the architrave ? Enough it is for us to know that they are building temples and carving statues and being paid for them. If they had asked us to pick out a name for the infant. . . . And a long time was spent in choosing names to select from if Melissa should give birth to a boy, and another list prepared in case the grandchild should be a girl. At length, weary of nomenclature, Biote said : Girl or boy, the child will need a cradle, and the cradle will need a quilt. She and Leto put their heads together, and Kebren, feeling the need of the evening air, sought the solitude of the wonted valley. His happiness was too great to be borne under a roof, and his mind was captured by the warble of the brook among its sedges and the evensong of a flock of little birds just now settled in the reeds.

I have brought Leto to see the temple that our sons will come back to finish, Biote said, and without seeming to notice his emotion she reminded him of the instructions they had received from Thrasilos for the protection of the temple against storms and time, saying : I spoke of a tarred cloth, but he answered that the first high wind would carry it away, mayhap with some of the masonry, and that it might be well to build a hut hard by for a slave whose charge would be to defend the temple against night thieves who might come to steal the marbles. All this hath been done, Kebren answered, and they walked down the spacious valley, seeing it with different eyes, when good-natured Leto said : This valley will be a fine walk for the children. But there are many bees about in the flowers, and I shall have to take care they do not get stung—a premonition that caused Biote and Kebren to break into gentle laughter ; and in the hope of making herself better understood, Leto continued : If boys be given unto us they will come with toy boats to sail on the brook, and I shall have to keep my eyes open lest they fall in it, and the same if they be girls, for then irises and forget-me-nots will tempt them.

We'd do well to put up a railing. Again there was laughter, and obedient to their instincts the women began to gather flowers to take home.

CHAPTER XX

A GIRL and a boy would have suited us better than two girls, said Kebren, and without raising her eyes Biote mentioned that she had always felt Melissa would be the first to bear. But one never knows, she continued. A bosom and a bum are no sure foretelling of motherhood. As often as not a thin girl—— Earine is no reed, Biote! By her sister's side she is one; but their sizes and shapes will not determine the grandchildren that the Gods will give us. And she went away, a bunch of keys at her girdle, a scarf about her shoulders, giving her orders, exacting obedience as she passed down the passages, entering the different rooms in an ever-increasing certainty that she was glad motherhood had fallen to the lot of Melissa rather than to Earine, for Rhesos's sake. His art is derived from the pattern which he still believes to be a gift from Aphrodite, and it may be that he is right, since the oracle said it; and as she went through courtyards and outhouses she took pleasure in remembering that Rhesos had little more from Earine than he would have had from any other girl coming to his workshop as a pattern. Even this was too much. Were she not his mother she would have liked to inspire his statues; she had a pretty little body; but a woman of forty is not the same as a girl of twenty, though the difference is little. And then her thoughts taking a swift turn, she found herself face to face with the fact that she had connived at this marriage. She had even planned it; if it had not been for her it never would have come to pass; and her absent-mindedness was such that the slaves wondered at the scowl that came and went in and out of her face, till rousing herself she gave her orders and passed on, resuming her

thoughts as she walked. She had always disliked the thought of Rhesos marrying, and could not put out of her mind the injustice that falls upon a mother when her favourite son is taken away from her by a girl. Rhesos's toddling steps were before her and his first words were unforgotten. She had taught him to read and to write, and now all of a sudden a girl claimed him, saying : He is mine ! Such was the law over every mother, but she liked it none the more for that. She would have preferred her son to remain with her for some years longer, but she could not plan Thrasilos's marriage without planning Rhesos's at the same time. She could not have kept Rhesos for ever in Aulis unmarried, nor have followed him up and down the seas, having a home to look after. She fell to thinking what would have happened to her if she had met a man like Rhesos when she was a young girl ; there would have been nothing else for her to do but to follow him ; and her thoughts sweeping by, she returned to her envy of the girl whose body inspired Rhesos. Away went her thoughts again, darting and skimming, crossing the seas, visiting the temples and statues that her sons were building, taking pleasure in Melissa's little girls, Lamia and Lais, and imagining a great robbery, hoisting sail with them, leaving but a brief message for their distracted mother to follow them to Aulis—a desperate drama of anguish and tears, travel and discoveries, and reproofs from Kebren, who would meet her at the Piraeus. But his reproofs would be neither too bitter nor too long ; the sail of Melissa's ship would be seen on the horizon ; and they would all be happy together.

And it being characteristic of Biote to emphasise her thoughts by an act, she sat down before her loom to weave a peplos for Melissa and she was still weaving when Kebren returned from the counting-house to sit beside her, embarrassed, for all day long at his desk he had been full of thoughts of her, and now the pleadings that had seemed so convincing to him had faded from his mind, and he rejoiced when she broke into speech, asking if a ship had come from Cnidus

bringing a letter. He answered that no ship had come in, and getting up from her loom soon after, she put it away, saying that her ear caught sounds of the slaves in the hall preparing the evening meal. I must look after them, she said, and Kebren was left alone to remember that he was an alien in Aulis and might very soon become an unwelcome alien—for why it was difficult to say. He had done nothing to merit the treatment he was receiving, which Biote did not seem aware she was meting out to him. After all, he was in her house, but the children were their children. And his thoughts moving on from the present out into the past, the surge of the years brought up memories of the night they had slept in Mnasalcas's grove, and of the day on the seashore when he had asked for a year in which to preach his doctrine that Helen rather than Athene should be the tutelar deity elect of the people. In his imagination, the three poplar-trees showed against the sky, the surf growled among the rocks, and her words resounded in his ears, telling him that if he went away he would go for ever. He had not consented ; it was only fair that she should allow him to put his ideas to trial ; and walking by his side her looks were harsh and her words cold. On their return to the house the evening reading of Homer had to go on, and when the last chapter was read he felt himself free. But Otanes said : Remain with us for a year, and if a year in Aulis should prove thee another Odysseus thou'l re-engage in thy long pursuit of Helen. Otanes's words were the first link in the chain, the rest but a sequence which he could not break, and had not wished to break, and it was not until his bondage had become galling that he had betaken himself to the Euxine, the pretext being to seek new outlets for trade ; in truth it was the enthusiasm of his youth rising up against the materialism into which his life had fallen without his perceiving it or insufficiently. But he had found none to listen to him in any of the Greek towns along the southern shores of the Euxine. As his youth had passed from him, so his ideas had passed out of the world, for each generation has its own ideas

And his thoughts flitting from the failure of his lectures to Nika, the little daughter of Thelamis, the woman in whose house he had lodged at Sinope, he remembered her amorous childhood, how she liked to walk with him through the town, to point out the things to be seen, to listen to him and to take her tastes from his, hanging upon every word he spoke. When Thelamis had said : Dear child, thou couldst not marry such a man (mentioning a name that had passed out of Kebren's memory), Nika agreed that he was too old, and when her mother added : He is younger than Kebren, the girl replied : Kebren is different. Thelamis, without weighing the words or seeing anything in the phrase but mere words, left her daughter's room, and finding herself alone with him Nika said : Kebren darling, come and sit upon my bed. It would have been easy to take her in his arms ; she was even too willing to be lifted by him from her pillow ; and if he had not taken advantage of the moment to possess her, it was because this would have meant that he would remain always in Sinope. There would have been no return for him to Aulis, unless with a lie upon his lips. Biote would suspect his infidelity, and he would be a prey to misgivings for ever after. . . . It is extraordinary, he said to himself, how moments like these fix themselves in memory. Nika is more clear to me now than she was in reality.

So did he think, and he continued to think of Nika whilst answering tiresome questions from Biote drily, without interest, leaving her no doubt wondering at his absent-mindedness. But she did not ask of what he was thinking, and in the silence into which their talk had dropped he remembered Nika's jealousy of Thelamis, whom she suspected of being his mistress, and thought he discerned now a resolve in the child's mind to outwit her mother. Thelamis had wished them all to go together to the theatre, but something had hurried her away, probably a meeting with her lover, and she had said : Thou'l follow with Nika. But when the time came for them to leave, the girl was not to be found, and

becoming anxious at last he had searched the house and discovered her alone reading. He had reproached her for causing him to lose a great part of the play that was being acted, not perceiving as he did now that Nika in her innocent heart, propense to kisses, had hidden herself hoping that a search for her would end in his arms. He was glad he had escaped her wiles. But Nika was a long time ago, and he began to see her in his imagination as a woman of five-and-twenty, married, the mother of children, perchance weary of her husband. If we were to meet she would not know me, he said, nor would I be certain that the woman in the crowd was Nika ; and were each to recognise the other, we should look upon the meeting as unfortunate for it would destroy the past, if any memory of the past remains worth thinking about. If he were to remind her of her desire on the evening she had hidden herself, to be discovered by him, a bewildered look would come into her face, and she would ask herself if it were really true that she had once loved him. She would think he was inviting her to listen to a story, for the young do not remember. She was very young, and mayhap had loved many men since, for the amorous child is the amorous woman for many a year, though sensuality dies in the end ; but not as soon as Biote would have it die, not at forty. Believe Biote he must, and he resolved not to speak to her again of her sensual years, for it vexed her when he did, that was certain, and he did not wish to vex her. But memories of Nika were upon him now, and gathering up some dried raisins and almonds to give him courage as he spoke, he followed Biote into the courtyard to ask her if she knew that more than a year had gone by since she locked her door against him.

I remember thy discourses, Kebren, that the bed is the centre of married life, and thy doctrine that as soon as a man or a woman withdraws from the bed marriage is at an end. But it cannot be that thou still clingest to the bed. We have slept more easily for the last year, and are good friends still. We would be better friends, Biote, more intimate friends,

dearer friends, if—— I will not hear thee preach the marriage bed all over again ! I have answered thee on every point raised, that the marriage bed is for the young and the middle-aged. We are but middle-aged, Biote ; forty is not old. Old for love, she replied, and of all, for those who have ceased to bear children. For twenty years I have not borne, and to lie together, pushing vainly, without any result, would be out of keeping with ourselves, derogatory, almost degrading. Thou didst not always think like that, Biote, and it is strange that love cannot be awakened in thee again. I might be roused, Kebren, but the time for love is past. We have our grandchildren to think about, and love of them will recompense us for what we have lost. Nothing will outweigh my love of thee, Biote. And feeling that at every word he uttered their estrangement was widening, he asked her if she had written to Earine. Why should I write to Earine ? she replied. Biote, it distresses me to hear thee speak like this. It makes me think that thine interest in life hath perished and that no one is dear to thee now, and it almost seems to me that I would sooner lose thee in the love of another man than see thee indifferent. I am not indifferent to Earine, Kebren ; nor to Melissa, who is a good girl. And a little bewildered in mind and grieved in soul Kebren rose to his feet, saying : I will go to my room, unless thou wouldest hear me read a chapter of Homer ? Biote answered that she would have liked to listen to him, but she wished to finish her peplos for Melissa ; and so they parted, Kebren feeling that very little life remained for him, concluding at last that the source of his despondency was not to be attributed to Biote's wish that their married life should end because she was not likely to have any more children. He did not wish for other children ; he had two sons that any man would be proud of. He had been fortunate in his children, though unlucky in many other things. And he could not make sure, not of a certainty, that his despondency was owing to Biote's locking of her door against him. Not of a certainty, he repeated, and a moment after he

acknowledged to himself that the pleasures of sex did not mean overmuch to him. He had never known a woman but his wife, and was only stealthily aware of his chastity whilst watching men bidding at the wharves for the sort of girl that a wealthy townsman would like to possess. Biote had intimated that she had no objection to his purchasing a slave girl ; all the same, he had not looked for one. Not being as other men, he did not need a manly stress, neither sentimentally nor physically. And to possess ourselves of what we need not, he said, is to lay up a store of trouble in the future. After a pause he continued : That the days should go by, every day the same as the preceding day, is enough for me, but is a daily round of duties enough for Biote ? He was afraid it was not, and whilst staring at his ledger he pondered a long freedom for them both, he from his counting-house, she from her household slaves. There was nothing to keep them now in Aulis, and thinking of the time when they would sail away together, he made show of applying himself to his ledger with a view to deceiving his chief clerk, who stood by with a bundle of papers in his hand. Why he should wish to deceive his clerk he did not know ; mayhap because it is the nature of man to suspect everybody when he is forming a secret project. But he found it difficult to settle the departure of certain ships ; he could think only of the moment when he would sound Biote regarding the projected holiday. We are all sly at times, and Kebren was innocently sly that evening. After the meal he did not offer to read aloud to her in the courtyard, nor did he take any interest in the tapestry she was weaving. Before it was bedtime Biote began to yawn, and taking her yawn as a signal, he mentioned that they had been a long while in Aulis and needed a change of air and of scene.

What thou sayest is true enough, Kebren ; Aulis is dull. I am depressed and weary, and shall not recover myself till we hoist sail. Tell me, she continued, what wonder shall we see first ? The Parthenon, on which thy sons have worked, he answered. And after Athens, whither ? she asked. Shall

we leave Corinth out and sail direct for Egypt? Why should we leave Corinth out, Biote? One of the great temples to Aphrodite stands in Corinth, on the isthmus, and from all parts of the world visitors come to worship; three hundred priestesses serve the Goddess. A still greater temple is the one in Cyprus—— I would sooner see the temples that Thrasilos builds and that Rhesos adorns with statues of different Goddesses. They have left Mitylene and are at Miletus, he answered, and beautiful as the temples are that Thrasilos builds, and the statues that Rhesos carves, there is still Egypt, the most wonderful thing that earth can show. Thou hast a thought, Biote, for the man who told me the story that our children loved to hear? Of the robbery of Cheops's pyramid, how it was achieved; yes, I remember, she replied. The children climbed on thy knees to hear it again and again. But thou hast been to Egypt so often that there is nothing new left for thee to see. Egypt is always new, Kebren answered, and seeing it with thee will be enough. We might drop anchor at Cos. What wonder is there to be seen at Cos? she asked. Nothing great as the pyramids, Biote; but after all, mountains are greater than pyramids. Size is not everything; indeed, it is very little. At Cos there is a fountain dedicate to the nymphs, who reclining on beds of freshly gathered rushes sing the hours away. We will go thither, Kebren, and pour libations and weave garlands. And taking his arm she added: Whither shall we go now? Anywhither, nowhither, but at least out of this courtyard. And their instincts leading them, they were soon walking through a piece of waste land along the shore of the Euripos—a large untidiness of hemlocks and dying ferns, with a little wood of pine-trees, some dark thickets and a path that led into a dell. A dell, said Biote, that needs little more than a marble seat for us and a fountain for fishes. We shall see many gardens in our wanderings from which to take thy plan, replied Kebren. Not in Thebes, I am sure, Kebren; Egypt is all granite and sand. But at Syracuse we shall find gardens.

Rhesos and Thrasilos will be working there soon ; so said their last letter. And Babylon hath gardens, Biote, but on too vast a plan for imitation.

The path they were following took them to the end of the long strip of land, and in view of the moon behind some aspen-trees, Biote said : What a pretty night ! Kebren did not answer ; he was thinking if the word ‘ pretty ’ was applicable to the night, and whilst seeking for a more suitable adjective he was turned from his search by Biote crying in a wailing voice : Athens, Corinth and Thebes are but dreams for me ! I had forgotten ! And turning she flung herself on his shoulder. Ajax hath escaped, Kebren, and I dare not leave Aulis lest Rhesos should return and find him gone. For some time he came snuffing about the house in search of Rhesos, and I hoped he would weary of the fruitless search and of the rough forest, living on rats and rabbits—for a wolf that hath been fed for many years is no longer the hunter that he once was. Tell me, Kebren, what am I to do ? We must dig pitfalls, said Kebren. No, I will not have him taken in pitfalls, she replied ; Rhesos would not like Ajax to be trapped. And Ajax would mistrust us ever afterwards, and even turn on Rhesos. I am distracted. A moment ago I was sailing through the islands, hearing the chime of the oars in the rowlocks, and now nothing seems to matter, not even the stars, for Ajax is gone. Rhesos will give me a hug on the wharf, but his words will be for Ajax—— And thou’lt tell him, Biote, that Ajax is dead ; the lie will save thee from all blame. It will be hard, Kebren, to greet Rhesos with a lie upon my lips. The lie cannot be spared to thee, Biote. And if Ajax should return from the forest ? she asked. Kebren paused to consider what answer he should make to her question, and not finding one he asked her to tell him of the escape. He dashed past me through the gate and away into the forest, without thought for the breakfast I was bringing him. After a bitch most likely in the neighbourhood, said Kebren ; more likely still, he was after Rhesos, and thinking we were keeping

Rhesos from him—— He is an old wolf now, she interjected. Not very old, replied Kebren, still thinking how she might explain her negligence credibly to Rhesos when he returned. At last he said : Their teeth gone, wolves die of hunger ; in two years he will be a skeleton, belike is one already. The lie must come piteously from my lips, Kebren. Canst think of no other plan ? Rhesos's eyes will look into mine ; I shall quail ; and when he seeks a reason for my tears, I shall answer : Ajax. Thou hast never lacked courage, Biote, and never will. I will try to lie bravely, she answered, and he believed her whilst foreseeing her struggle to lie steadfastly, saying with hesitating voice : We found Ajax dead in his paddock one morning. But Rhesos might ask her where she had buried him, and on his way to the counting-house Kebren doubted her courage to accompany her son to an imaginary grave and say : Here. Weeks and months went by, and he often wondered if her dread of meeting Rhesos continued ; but he shrank from questioning her ; only once did pity compel him to words : Thy strained and tired face, Biote, tells of an evil night. Thou hast dreamed again of Rhesos and his wolf ? She answered him with her eyes, and he added : I read thy face. The dread in thy heart is the same as it was in the beginning. And will be, she answered, till Rhesos hears that I lied to him. Thou'l not be able to keep the secret always from him, Biote ? I can tell thee nothing, Kebren. It is strange that the escape of a wolf through a gate should be fraught with so much sorrow for Rhesos and for me. And the long holiday that was projected, Biote, will never come to pass. The years are closing in upon us, she replied, but there is still time for that holiday. And her thoughts wandering a little, she sat before her loom, her hands drifting over her knees, lost in a great bitterness, sensation rather than thought, and when Kebren returned soon after in a great hurry, he was taken aback. Of what art thou thinking ? he asked. What unhappiness is this ? I do not know, she answered. I know only that I am unhappy and that nobody can help me.

I can help thee, Biote. A ship hath come in, waiting for the tide to turn. And in the ship? she cried. Are our sons, Biote, their wives, and our grandchildren. Come, we shall not have long to wait on the wharf. O, Kebren, I cannot meet Rhesos among many people As well meet him on the wharf as afterwards, Kebren replied. Courage, Biote! I have courage enough for everyth ng else, she answered, and Kebren, remembering that he had heard these words from her before, pondered, drawing the last dregs of meaning out of them as they walked to the wharf, where courage was given to Biote to lie with such simplicity that Rhesos did not suspect he was being deceived and began to wonder who could have been so cruel as to poison a wolf that was as tame as a dog and had never taken a kid or a lamb from anybody.

I had looked forward to seeing the old fellow, mother. We were dear to each other, and no doubt he grieved for me Biote turned away, dreading the day when some mischance might reveal to Rhesos that she had lied to him; even should this day never come to pass, a secret would divide her from her son. Rhesos! she said suddenly, and she would have told him the truth then had not Kebren, watchful whilst talking and playing with his grandchildren, cried out: Hast not heard enough, Rhesos, of thy wolf's death from poison?—or if that did not come to pass, from old age? Thou wouldest never have seen him again. Come, tell us of the statues thou hast carved and of the temples Thrasilos hath built. Melissa and Earine, in charge of the children, will precede us by a few paces, escaping from stories old to them. Melissa protested but the children requiring that many things should be explained to them, the two sisters hastened their steps, leaving Kebren and Biote to hear from their sons that it was at Delphi they were tempted to question the oracle regarding the temple they had left incomplete at Aulis. As the little procession advanced from the wharf into the town the folk ran from their houses, all anxious to tell the great sculptor and the great architect how pleased they were to see them

again so that they might thank them for all they had done to make Aulis known and admired by the world. Rhesos and Thrasilos replied that Aulis was known to the world already, the fleet that went to Troy having assembled in its bays, to which it was answered that that was long ago, and a forgetful world needs to be reminded. As they passed through the town nearly every house contributed a citizen, moved by the desire to see and hear and also by the hope that they would not be dismissed when they arrived at the house without wine being distributed and cake ; a speech, too, was expected from Rhesos. And Rhesos having a sense of all that was passing in their minds, gave a signal to halt, and from the threshold of his father's house addressed the crowd somewhat as follows :

Good friends and citizens, before it was our fortune to meet you on our way from the wharf my father and mother were hearing from me and from my brother how it came to pass that we abandoned a journey to Sicily, where we were expected to build a temple. You would like to hear the story of what happened at Delphi to turn us from Sicily to Aulis, and an easy story it will be to tell, for you all remember the great storm that threatened to sweep Aulis into the sea seven years ago. It would be strange if you had forgotten it, for you all lost something in the storm, some a house, or a father or a mother or a brother carried away. During that night we thought our lives were about to come to an end, and next day it seemed to us that although our lives had been spared our ruin was complete. And so convinced were we all of our ruin that my brother abandoned the temple he was building on the knoll at the end of the valley and I the marble out of which I was carving a statue of Aphrodite. Ever since, the disaster that befell Aulis hath been talked of by you ; certainly my brother and I have talked of it ; and when we heard by letter that all our ships were not lost and that our father hoped his trade would not pass from him and that Aulis would become prosperous again, we remembered the temple and statue

abandoned in a moment of terror. And our thoughts passing on from Aulis to Olympus, we began to think of the abandonment of temple and statue as a great insult offered to Aphrodite herself, and wherever we went we prayed in her temples that we might be forgiven, till at last we arrived at Delphi to do some work on the temple of Apollo ; and it was there the thought came to us of submitting our conscience and the perplexities thereof to the oracle, and asking for guidance. But being poor mortals we resisted the pressing temptation to do what we knew we must do in the end, till at last we could resist no longer, and the answer we got from the oracle was that we must make amends to Aphrodite by completing her temple and setting up in it the statue already begun. But having a temple to build in Sicily, we had to send thither to ask for a delay, which the Sicilians were loth to grant, till perceiving that to refuse our request would be to defy the oracle at Delphi, the priests granted the delay on the condition that it would not be prolonged beyond the three months agreed upon. But the Delphic priests would not allow us to depart until we had completed the work they had entrusted to us ; wherefore being beset on both sides I thought it well to send a messenger to one of my fellow-craftsmen in Athens, begging him to help me in my extremity, which he could do by going to Aulis. You know, or you do not know, that measurements and points are taken, and that an inferior craftsman is employed to chip away till the statue begins to show itself in the marble. Corobius is not an inferior craftsman but a devoted friend who hath been in Aulis now for some weeks chipping, always chipping, cutting away the marble to within an eighth of an inch of the statue.

Wilt lead us to the workshop where thy friend is chipping, Rhesos, for we would see him at work ? cried somebody in the crowd, and Rhesos replied : My friend looks forward to showing me the work he hath done, and he would find himself distrusted among people—well-wishers certainly, but strangers to him. My workshop is not the place for talk and for ramble,

for drinking wine and eating cake. These will be served to you in the central hall, where my brother will take my place and tell you of our adventures, and they are many, amusing and picturesque, with here and there moments of gravity, of doubt and mistrust, which are never far away from him who commits his life to marble or to words or to music ; and these will help you to understand, as far as you can understand, an art which you do not practise. For art is for the artist, and stories about art and artists are for the populace. The mission of art, too, hath always been a popular controversy and will be to the end of time. I am not a travelling rhapsodist and know only that art is ; but the fact that art is, though enough for me, is not enough for all and sundry. But bear your souls in patience ; all and sundry are not so glib in Aulis as in Attica, so, I repeat, bear your souls in patience. The opportunity will come for you to hear all these things in a month or two months, when the temple is dedicated to the Goddess and my representation of her is placed in the cella.

Rhesos stood nearly as tall as his father, the same blond face and hair and the same gravity, which never moved in the father but which wavered in the son's face from grave to gay. Whilst speaking his face concentrated, till aglow with vision it fixed the attention of all, and the crowd would have granted him anything he asked ; none would have said nay to him, for all felt, if they did not understand, that the man before them was a man who had come into the world to live his own life, to be himself and nothing but himself. As the glow of vision faded from his face another illumination began in it his eyes sparkled, and the life within him flowing out, drew his audience unto him and cast him forth. The audience was the instrument and he the musician. The unexpected word was eagerly awaited and it always exceeded the anticipation, and Rhesos enjoyed the wonderful effervescence of thought uncalled, himself almost as unconscious of it as the fountain of its showers or the wind of its fragrance.

We being all friends here, you will allow me some little

reservations, and for these I promise you that when the day comes for the dedication of the temple and the placing of the Goddess in the cella, you will hear all that may be said regarding the meaning of art and its relation to nature, of the mission of art in the world and why the world cannot live without art, and a hundred other things that I know not of. And the temple itself will be a trysting-place for strange animals—not lions or tigers or elephants, but small animals, so none need be afraid. There will be spry weasels and squealing rats, ambitious mice and surly badgers. Amphibian creatures will come from the rivers and streams, and embassies from the forest. The cuckoo will be there with his tiresome notes, the raven with hoarse predictions, and the gossiping jackdaw. And a monkey will come down with the birds from the branches, an old grey-headed monkey who will pull the tails of all the birds and beasts. and those whose tails have not yet been pulled will laugh and applaud, though in truth they are very weary of the old grey monkey, having heard all his jokes (which are not jokes at all) for the last fifty or sixty years. I have said that I cannot tell why art was given to mankind. Perhaps it was as an excuse for the assembling of all these strange birds and beasts, each with his beak, his snout, his plumage, his fur, his growl, his squawk, his gait and his flight—all striving after admiration except the beetle, who pursues his way till trodden into the ground. And a fair hearing it will be listening to all these explaining what art is without looking at the statue at all. So it hath always been; so it will always be. A great afternoon I predict for you, watching the capering of the monkeys and hearing the loquacity of the parrots, all talking different languages and knowing nothing of what they are talking. Only a month or two, good friends, and then my brother's temple and my statue offer this entertainment for your pleasure. Let patience possess your souls, and to help patience on her way betake yourselves to the tables on which cakes and wine await you. My task is in my workshop, to consider with my

old friend and helper, Corobius, some little problems which interest us : whether we can carry the simplification of a knee-cap a little further without losing its vitality. But the knee-cap will be in marble ! cried a voice from the crowd. . . .

Rhesos bade them good-bye with a wave of his hand, and they watched his back shaking with laughter ; and crowding round the cakes and wine they drank his health, extolling his genius the while to Thrasilos and Kebren, finding inadequate words to express their feelings, but aware dimly, incoherently, that they had perceived something above the natural that afternoon, a man akin, however remotely, to divinity. And after the wine and the cakes they walked down the street delighting in the story of how whilst waiting for Aphrodite to appear to him Rhesos had caught sight of two swimmers, Earine and Melissa—Earine giving him a message from Aphrodite herself, no doubt, for it was she who gave him the movement he had been seeking for months. Very soon other stories began to appear in the legends that were forming and the folk looked after Rhesos as he walked to his workshop, and one day seeing him walking with his wife towards the woods along the coast—the woods that he and his brother had loved when they were boys, building a sort of crow's nest high up in a tree where they could pass the night out of the way of wolves—they recalled Ajax, the cub-wolf that the boys had stolen from the den whilst the bitch was away hunting on the higher hills for a fawn or laying in wait for an unwary lamb strayed from the flock. Memories long laid by were awakened, and it was sagely remarked that a man having once gotten a liking for the company of a wolf would return to it.

He is after another cub, you may be sure of that, said a long, lean woman whose head was never still on her shoulders, and the folk were disposed to think with her that Rhesos was on the look-out for another wolf—a guess not far from the truth. Ajax was not forgotten by Rhesos, and a memory in his feet led him every day past the tree up which he had

carried the wolf when a little cub, before he was able to lap, and afterwards memory prolonged his walks with Earine as far as Thermopylæ, where the talk dropped easily from flocks to wolves ; and sustained by a recollection, he would gossip on and on, giving a willing ear to everything that the shepherds said, especially when they mentioned that of late years wolves had not been seen often in the woods, some having been taken in traps, others poisoned, many shot from the boughs of trees. We have better dogs now than we had twenty years ago, a shepherd said, a fine breed from Thessaly that understands wolves as well as ourselves, holding them at bay till we come up with our spears Rhesos did not like these stories, and he defended wolves, saying that if they were vicious, men had made them so, just as men made each other vicious, and he much relished telling his single experience with a wolf ; to which the shepherds answered that Ajax was a chance wolf, and it would not be easy to find another like him. And the talks continued till one evening Earine, taking Rhesos by the arm, said : The day is drooping and it will be dark returning home through the woods ; let us on at once. Art afraid of the dark ? he asked. Of the things that move about in the dark, she answered. And to humour her he bade the shepherds good-bye, and they returned through the wistful woods, Earine watchful and subdued till certain dark thickets were passed.

A greyness in yon thicket I am sure is following us, she said at last, but make no cry nor look round till we reach a tree into which we can climb. Rhesos laughed aloud, and Earine expected the wolf to rush out upon them, and this it did, but at Rhesos's call, for the wolf was none other than Ajax. He hath been seeking me for seven years through these woods, said Rhesos, coming upon my trail at last. My poor Ajax, if thou hadst not come upon my trail to-day we should never have seen each other again. Soup thou shalt have to lap, with soft meat in it, for I see thou hast lost some teeth. Open thy jaws and let me see how thou art for teeth.

. . . Some have gone, some are loose, and thou must have found it hard to feed thyself. To tear open the hare and the rabbit and the kid the fine remorseless teeth are needed with which thou didst tear the windpipe out of the shepherd's dog that fell upon me without reason, or for a reason that I have forgotten. Ajax, rememberest thou these things ? And on hearing his name Ajax raised himself up almost to the height of Rhesos and hugged him with his forepaws. A trick, Earine, that he learnt soon after we stole him from his dam. And he told her how Ajax had been brought up on a rag dipped in milk, refusing the rag at first and at last welcoming it— And when he had sucked enough milk from it he climbed upon my shoulders and enfolded me in his paws. Dost remember, Ajax ? No, thou hast no memory but for smells, mine haunting thee for seven years. Thine old heart must have beat quicker when thou camest upon it in yonder thicket ! . . . Thou hast never spoken so tenderly to me, Rhesos. Ah, Earine, jealousy befits thee not—jealous of an old wolf, my faithful servant ? Earine was ashamed of her jealousy, yet unable to subdue it, and they wandered home, Rhesos talking all the while to his old friend, Ajax raising himself to lick his master's face now and again.

Thou art hungry, my Ajax ! Ajax cut a caper and seemed to smile, as if he knew that a meal such as he ate in olden times awaited him, the slaves bustling to attend on his wants. The medley of rejoicing voices brought in Biote, and at the sight of Ajax she leant against the door-post, turning pale at the thought of what might befall her. But Rhesos was too happy in himself for harsh words, and he told the story, saying : After seeking me for seven years his joy in coming upon my trail is beyond human understanding. Our understanding of thee, Ajax, is but partial. Here is Biote, and if thou seest her but dimly, thy nostrils cannot have forgotten her. She did not keep thee from me, do not believe it ; announce thyself to thine old friend, my mother, who left the paddock gate on the jar. And in obedience to his master

Ajax laid his paw on Biote's knee, but without lifting himself for an embrace. He rushed past me, she said, and ever since he hath been in the forest, coming round the house at first in search of thee, giving up hope in the last years. I thought he must be dead. All the same, I dared not leave Aulis with thy father, who wanted to take me away for a long holiday. And why didst thou refuse thy holiday, mother? For that Ajax might return, seeking thee once more, or come round the house to pick up a rat or a rabbit. Glad to get either, said Rhesos; see how thin the old fellow is! Dost remember how bravely he saved me from a shepherd's dog? I thank thee, Rhesos, for not blaming me; I should have shut the gate when I brought him his breakfast. I owe thee no grudge, mother. I dare say he enjoyed himself in the forest; it was a nice holiday for him. Now, good-bye. I am on the way to my workshop. Ajax is coming with me. May I not come too? she asked, and Rhesos seeming to be willing, she took his arm. Watch him, mother. His step quickens. He knows the street, and once inside the door he'll snuff about to make sure that he is in his own quarters. . . . What did I tell thee? Already the forest is forgotten. And now that he hath rolled himself into sleep in his corner, said Biote, show me thine Aphrodite; and Rhesos unveiled his marble, saying: Behold her, and find fault or admire, as it pleases thee. A little filing and scraping remains for me to do before she goes to the temple, he added. So that is the Goddess that cost thee seven years of labour! I can work a long time on a marble, mother, but not seven years. And feeling that his mother admired the statue merely because he had carved it, Rhesos began to tell his travels; but he had not reached Sicily in his narrative when Ajax came out of his corner. Ajax, go back! Biote cried. I would hear thy master tell of Syracuse. Speak not harshly to Ajax, mother; he does not understand harsh words. My travels would make a poor narrative compared with the story he could tell, if he had words, of his joys and sorrows in the forest and his daily search

for me. A much more wonderful story it would be than my journey to Syracuse. I can imagine him meeting his kindred, and their doubtful talk with him, for animals talk, though their talk is not ours ; and recognising him as an outcast they would pass on, the bitches with their tails between their legs, showing that they would consider themselves dishonoured to mate with a wolf that had taken his food from the hands of men. I would tell thee my suffering, Rhesos, Ajax did not suffer more than I when he ran away through the gate and off into the forest. Mother, why speak of it again ? It was Ajax himself who put an end to thy suffering. Isn't that so, Ajax, dear old boy ? I am afraid his sight is dimming ; one eye is half-hidden by a whiteness, a film. He is going blind, and we can do nothing. Tell me what father said. He said we should dig a pitfall, but I refused to have Ajax hunted or snared. And thou didst well, said Rhesos. Ajax was bound to seek me out and to find me sooner or later. There is somebody at the door, Rhesos—Earine, perchance. No, mother ; Earine comes here only when she sits.

Ajax was on his legs in a moment, thinking that his master was going to leave the workshop, but he returned to his corner when Rhesos let in Thrasilos, who had come with a letter. Phidias and Kallikrates and Iktinos are coming to see my temple and thy statue ! he said. There is much to be done and little time to do it, Rhesos answered. And seeing that the brothers had business on hand, Biote took her leave of them.

CHAPTER XXI

A FEW days later Ajax was taken by a panther, and after a night of sorrow Rhesos tumbled out of bed thinking it was strange that the day before the brutal rape he should have descried the shape of a wolf in a rock hard by the bushes out of which the panther had sprung, and, to make his vision plain

to Thrasilos, had marked the rallying-points which they would have to follow some day, saying : He is an old wolf, Thrasilos, with not many years of life in front of him, and when he dies we'll carve this rock to his memory. Now that Ajax was dead he would have liked to carve the whole rock into a group, Ajax standing on his hind-legs with his paws about his master's neck. But there is not time for a group in the round, only for a rough relief, he said to his brother as they faced the rock before beginning work. Now, Thrasilos, admit that thou canst follow the head and the shoulders, where the paws will come, the haunches, the tail, the back. And to please his brother Thrasilos saw all it was desirable he should see, saying to himself : If I do not yet perceive Ajax in the rock, I shall presently. Here is Corobius, said Rhesos, coming down the road. A minute late but no more, said Corobius. I promised to be here at dawn, he continued ; turn thy head, Rhesos, and thou'l see the day beginning in grey and silver. Leave the silvery fingers of the dawn to turn rosy without our knowledge, and tell me, Corobius, what is our chance to mark out Ajax's image in a week ? Wilt tell me first, Rhesos, if thou art aiming at no more than a rough representation ? A rough representation, to be finished another day, Rhesos answered, and they mounted the ladders that had been raised overnight for their purpose.

Our hammers have frightened the heron and the ducks from the brook, and brought us a robin. Clutching a twig with his wiry little legs, he sings his mournful ditty as if he shared our grief for Ajax. Dost believe, Thrasilos, he is aware of our grief ? He is aware of the coming winter, Rhesos, and is uncertain in which house he will spend it if the winter should prove too severe. But why should he be uncertain, Thrasilos ? All last winter he hopped round our table, waiting till we left the hall to thrust his bill into the butter—a friendly little bird, with black, intelligent eyes. But I see a woman coming down the road, mother for certain,

earlier out of the house than I have ever known her, come to hear how Ajax was killed. He was carried away by a panther ! he cried, as soon as Biote came within hearing. So much I know, she answered. But why did the panther leave the ox he had felled ? Must I go all over it again, mother ? Yes, Rhesos ; I would hear thee tell the story ; and that I may hear without interruption bid Thrasilos and Corobius stay their hammers. The driver, fearing a stumble down the incline, said Rhesos, allowed the oxen to choose their own pace, and they plodded, unsuspicuous of the lurking animal, the wind coming from the east. I was walking in the rear with Ajax, my eyes on Aphrodite, well satisfied, so thickly had we wrapped her in fleeces, when a panther burst from the bushes, bringing down one of the oxen. His fellow, taking fright, would have broken loose, but the driver was at his head, and Ajax, thinking the panther was about to spring upon me, threw himself in the midst of the struggle and was dragged away at a great pace into the forest. We should have foreseen the panther and had a few spearmen to defend the cart. We cannot foresee everything, said Biote. I will get thee another cub. No, mother ; I love but once, like Ajax. A strange fate his was : seven years seeking me in the forest, to lose me in a moment. Was the ox much hurt ? Biote asked. Stunned rather than hurt, Rhesos answered ; we helped him on to his hooves, and the statue is now in the cella. The death of Ajax hath poisoned the day for thee, Rhesos. This day and many days to come, mother. I shall never forget the old fellow. Now I must return to the carving of him. I had hoped, said Biote, that thou and Thrasilos and Corobius would return to Aulis for the morning meal. A snack is all we need, Thrasilos answered, and we have that in the basket. And whilst eating their bread and cheese they hearkened to the horns resounding through the richly wooded hills, capturing the notes faintly farther and still farther away. The hounds seem to have been on the panther's trail, said Rhesos. A bad scenting day, replied

Corobius. Now they are coming this way ! cried Thrasilos. The sculptors listened, and a few minutes later the huntsman appeared, cantering in front of the pack. A plump of spear-men followed, and Rhesos was sure they were returning with the panther. But the spoil slung on a spear was no more than the remains of Ajax, discovered in the panther's den. A peasant came running, saying he had seen the beast at day-break in yon woods, and the huntsman blew his horn and cantered away. The panther will have half-a-dozen of the hounds laid low before he is killed, said Corobius. The hounds will bring him to bay ; the spearmen will kill him, Rhesos answered, and turning from the unlovely sight of Ajax's mangled remains, he fell to digging his friend's grave beneath the rock, leaving Thrasilos and Corobius to continue the carving. If the carving is to be finished we cannot spare thee, said Corobius, and with reluctance Rhesos passed over the task of grave-digging to the peasant, who bartered his pleasure in following the hunt for a drachma, and the carving was continued till the close of day.

We have done good work, said Corobius. Already the rock is more than rock. And they continued their work till the end of the week, when Thrasilos was dispatched to guide their visitors to the temple, Rhesos now and then climbing to the highest point, hoping to see Phidias in the distance, and returning to ask Corobius : Dost think he'll disappoint us ? Euripides might flatter me with his presence, he continued, my father having taken the parts of messengers in the theatre, and perhaps Sophocles. Meanwhile we will continue to get our wolf into shape. And it was hammer, hammer, hammer, till at last Corobius cried from the top of the rock : They come ! They come ! and Rhesos climbing to the highest crag that he might see better, said : Kallikrates and Iktinos walk together. Thrasilos should have put a poet between them, but he sacrificed ceremony in his desire to walk with Phidias. I do not blame him. And his heart rejoiced ; nothing could rob him now

of the certainty that Phidias would see his Aphrodite. He had gone as a boy to see Phidias and now Phidias was coming to see him, and his eyes on the folk walking towards him he sought for his master and friend, unable at first to accept the man walking with Thrasilos as Phidias, so pale did he look, so irresolute was his walk. Master, he cried, pass me not by ! I am coming down the ladder. . . . From the top of that rock I was watching for thee, thinking of the day we first met on the steps of the Parthenon and of thine instruction to me. Of instruction there was not much need, Rhesos ; the gift was in thee from the beginning. And it hath not withered ; thou art acknowledged, I hear, as a sculptor everywhere. And by thee, O Phidias ? My presence here is an acknowledgment, Phidias answered, adding that Rhesos must not thank him overmuch for coming to Aulis. For the physician in whose charge I am said that the little voyage would ease my complaint. But thy recovery, master—— There is little hope of recovery, Rhesos, I may say none at all. My sickness is stone in the bladder, and I hope that thy life will come to an end by some other hurt, for in the night the pang of the stone seems more than I can bear ; yet I do bear it somehow. If it were only the pain the stone causes at times, I might live for a few more years, but very often long intervals go by without my being able to relieve myself of water. The sound of passing feet, of voices, is enough to stay its passage, and I walk on in pain, seeking a deeper quiet. A certain rock water relieves me ; I had a store brought on board and drank it all the while, and am feeling better to-day than I have done for many days. But talk of incurable sickness serves no purpose. Thou hast not seen the Parthenon ? Not yet, Rhesos answered. Thy statue of Athene—is it finished, master ? I was afraid I might not live to see it finished, Phidias replied, but the Gods willed otherwise, and now that it is finished it matters little whether I live six months longer or die to-day. I would escape the pain, however,

which is different from any other pain, so pregnant is it, and if the rock water fails a drink of hemlock will not. And death, master? Of death I have no fear, Phidias answered. Why should a man in pain dread his pain being taken from him for ever? But, my dear Rhesos, I have not come from Athens to talk to thee of my bodily ailments, but to share thy triumph. My triumph is thine, dear master. To have been thy pupil is honour enough for me. It was thy solicitude for my health, Phidias continued that led me—— But I see Sophocles waiting for me to present thee to him.

I have come from Athens, said Sophocles, to salute the distinguished pupil of our great sculptor, Phidias; and it was a pleasure to Rhesos to see these two great men together, the hand of the poet on the sculptor's shoulder. He blushed and was embarrassed, but the poet's easy demeanour and gracious language helped him into speech, and he spoke of his seven years' absence and of the pleasure it was to return to his native land, and then of the islands he had visited and of a temple and a statue. But statues and temples reminding him of Phidias standing by, he was embarrassed again, till at last he could no longer restrain himself from speaking of a great physician who lived in Sicily and had lately discovered means of treating the disease from which Phidias suffered, and he pressed upon Phidias the necessity of a journey to Sicily. The advice of the Sicilian physician could only prolong my life a few years, Phidias replied. My life ended with the Parthenon. Moreover, so long a journey is beyond my strength; I would not die in Sicily. Should such a sad event happen, said Sophocles, thou'llt be brought back to Athens—— Speak not of bringing him back to Athens dead! cried Rhesos. He will return to Athens alive, for I will attend on him by night and by day. Thy work is in the workshop, Rhesos, and not by a bedside. I am young, master, and can afford to lose a bust or statue. Sophocles hath written many plays, Rhesos continued; one more or less will not contribute to his glory; he can come with us. The old men smiled

at the youth's enthusiasm, and Sophocles said : Thy natural and spontaneous love of art, and thy willingness to sacrifice some of thine own life to save a great life touches us. But Phidias doubts his strength for the journey, and the remedy, perchance. Have I not said that my life ended with the Parthenon ? Phidias replied, and this world having nothing more to show me, I may as well hurry away to learn the secrets that perplex us here. Thinkest that what hath been withheld from us on this side will be revealed to us on the next ? Sophocles asked. We may smile at what we have left behind, said Rhesos, but we shall know—— The word *know*, Sophocles interjected, is unintelligible beyond the confines of this world, which may be but a little dust collected in the cogs of a great wheel. But the great wheel may know, master. I have only to answer thee again that the word *know* is unintelligible beyond the confines of our lives.

Sophocles was about to say more, but a man was standing by, his eyes so plainly fixed upon Rhesos that Sophocles said : Here is the young sculptor whose genius hath invited us hither, Euripides. And whilst Rhesos enjoyed Euripides's kindly words, he enjoyed also his kindly countenance. His brow, though less commanding than Sophocles's, is good, he said to himself. A well-turned head, a fine brow and a long, thin nose make a face that I should like to put into marble. The only thing I have against him is his smile, which is a little mechanical ; but were it taken away from him we should not see his teeth, shapely and white as they were when he was twenty. A transparently good man, untarnished by vanity, jealousy or envy, worthy of a place on the steps of the throne below Sophocles and Phidias. And whilst watching the many edging forward to behold and to exchange words with the three poets, he continued : Having lived all their lives in noble thoughts and legends it would be strange indeed if their faces were not modelled accordingly. Our thoughts model us ; Sophocles and Euripides look out of their tragedies, Phidias out of his sculpture, the same dignity, the same

candour, the same sweetness, the same eternity. However human their lives may have been in the beginning, their work hath raised them above humanity and they enjoy calm, whilst we remain fretful, frightened by every ache and pain, and of all, by the word death. But not these men. Why should a man in pain dread his pain bein ; taken from him ? Phidias answered me. Rhesos fell to co isidering once more how he might best persuade Phidias to undertake the long journey, but a young youth engaged in animated converse with the group he had gathered round hi n carried his thoughts from Sicily and raised his wonder wh the youth might be. One still in his teens, he said ; sixteen or seventeen I judge him to be, yet he imposes himself on th · old and middle-aged. His gay voice betrays a light-hearte l scoffer, and the swift play of light and shadow over his full oval face is my surety that a poet is hidden in him.

Not for seven years have we seen thee, Rhesos !—words spoken in his ear without warning. So thou hast come to Aulis, Morikos, for the dedication of the temple ? To admire thine Aphrodite, Rhesos, and to see thee, tidings having come across the seas of the work thou hast done in Mitylene, Rhodes, Syracuse, Cos, Chios, Lesbos, Sardis. Some of the places thou hast mentioned are known to me, replied Rhesos, some are unknown. Tell me of thy work, said Morikos. We will find an hour before thy return to Athens to talk of it, Rhesos answered, and of the days when we worked together on the Parthenon, passing jests as we sat carving capital after capital. Thou hast escaped from such menial work, Rhesos ; favoured of the Gods thou wert from the beginning. And taking these words to hint at a mournful story, to parry it Rhesos said : Thou, who knowest Athens day by day, canst tell me who the blithe youth may be that telleth stories to the group yonder ; from the laughter his sallies provoke I guess them to be sharp and well directed. The youth yonder, said Morikos, is Aristophanes ; talked of he is round certain taverns, coming into fame, so it is said,

and being but a youth his effrontery is enjoyed. It may be different when he hath written more plays. Plays ? Rhesos asked. He cannot be out of his teens ! He is not, retorted Morikos. His first play, *The Banqueters*, is being handed round. Euripides hath read it and will use his influence to get it performed. For his luck Aristophanes should be grateful, said Rhesos, to which Morikos answered : Gratitude in a wit does not save the patron from gibes, and the gibe in fashion is : Here comes Euripides with his little oil-can ! Euripides is now beckoning to him, Rhesos continued, and he gains the attention of Euripides and Sophocles and Phidias as easily as he did that of the folk. I would hear him. And advancing through the crowd they heard Aristophanes telling that he had just left a cobbler-poet reading an epitaph to be engraved on the tomb of a wolf in Boeotian hexameters. Speak not ill of Boeotia, said Sophocles. But if Boeotia chooses to write epitaphs in hexameters, may I not demur ? How old art thou, Aristophanes ? Thou shouldst be able to tell my age, master, by my words. If they are wise I am young ; if they are foolish I am old. Impertinent boy ! Without answering Aristophanes went in search of the cobbler, and returning with him, he said : Now, speak for thyself, Thyonicus, and if thou'rt too bashful to speak, let thine hexameters speak for thee.

Great masters of the Athenian drama, said Thyonicus, this youth mocks me. I am used to mockery from the townsfolk, but you, sirs, may hear with different ears, and I will read my hexameters, taking the hazard that happiness may cloud mine eyes and tears and sobs choke my voice :

Stranger, uplift thine eyes to the graven image of Ajax,
Hewn by his master, the sculptor Rhesos, out of the high rock.
Dreamers both : one dreaming his sculpture from city to city,
Ajax seeking his master's scent from forest to forest.
Rats and rabbits his food, he roamed through the tangled
thickets
Snuffing, and ere he died he beheld the face of his master.

Tall he stood as he rested his paws on his master's shoulders,
 Licking his face. But pity the fate of wolves as of mortals,
 Stranger, alike in this, that truth and devotion avail not
 'Gainst the appointed hour. This learn in the story of Ajax,
 Crazy with age and with joy, who fell to the fangs of a panther.

Brave wolf, renowned for ever thou shalt be in Aulis ! cried many voices, and in the confusion Sophocles placed the wreath destined for Rhesos on Thyonicus's brow. For forty years I have hammered soles, cried the happy cobbler, unsuspecting that at every stroke of my hammer the moment was drawing nearer when at the bidding of the divine Fates the father of dramatic poetry would place a laurel crown on my brow ! I would give thanks to the Gods, and to thee, Sophocles, their messenger, in appropriate words, and will do so later in an ode. The laurel perishes leaf by leaf, said Aristophanes, but the sole endures if it be well hammered. Somebody cried that Kebren was beckoning them to the temple, and the company moved forward, leaving Milon and Thyonicus in each other's arms.

Modesty is very winning, said Sophocles. Like courage, Aristophanes replied, and surprised at the interruption Sophocles continued : A treacherous smile played about thy lips whilst Thyonicus read his verses. A smile is enough for halting hexameters ! the boy answered. A kind word is never out of place, said Euripides, even when hexameters limp. Thou hast brought thy little oil-can, master. And thou the vinegar, Aristophanes ! Didst come to Bœotia to sprinkle it ? Why should I come to Bœotia to sprinkle vinegar ? What then is thy errand ? asked Sophocles. I came in search of a comedy. And mayhap will return to Athens without one. Not so, replied the boy. I have found my comedy in Thyonicus. Then tell it, marvellous boy, and enliven the end of our journey. The title ? asked Euripides. The title, master ? *The Apes*. And the chief character ? Have I not said, master, that I found my comedy in Thyonicus, wherefore he is the chief character, not the Thyonicus we have left

behind but the Thyonicus of the future. Twenty-five years hence he will be a venerable old man with a beard and a staff, the aspects of a false prophet. Thou believest not then in prophets ? asked Sophocles. Thou railest against the prophets as well as the Gods ? The two go together, Aristophanes answered. But let us hear how the prophet appears to thee in the years to come. I have told his appearance, master, and his character coincides with it, which is as it should be. The laurel wreath hath swollen him with pride, and in the fullness of his age he believes himself to be a compendium, an abridgment, a summary of all available knowledge, and itches to dispense his wisdom to all and sundry. Perceiving the necessity of his wisdom on every side, he stops by the river bank to reprove the washer women for their lack of skill in washing ; he undertakes to teach them how to wash the clothes properly. And when they are fully instructed he continues his walk along the river bank, pondering on the folly of the river, which might easily have taken a different course to its very great advantage. Aulis hath become almost uninhabitable through the orations of Thyonicus the prophet, and the townsfolk come before the magistracy to ask : How long ? How long ? How long ?

The first complainant is the schoolmaster, whose school hath been emptied by Thyonicus's preaching that learning is unnecessary, in fact a hitch and a hindrance to many a man. Any gifts we may have, Thyonicus contends, we bring into the world with us, and we should leave life to sharpen them ; the schoolmaster's teaching only serves to blunt. A dangerous creed indeed ! the three magistrates murmur, and the schoolmaster continues : All we can do, says this childless man, is to teach our children a few little habits, no more. The magistrates debate the question and promise the schoolmaster that if Thyonicus can be proved to have acted against the law in anything, he shall be punished, and the schoolmaster bows and gives way to the butcher, the next complainant. The man Thyonicus who hath emptied the school

will also empty my shop, says the butcher, for he teaches that men, women, and children should abstain from animal food, and I have come to ask you, sirs. what will become of mankind ; for if man abstains from eating the animals about him, the animals will eat him ! Swine are prolific, and our forests will be overrun. My knife will blu it in its sheath. Prometheus, says a magistrate, stole fire fro n heaven, but from whom did Thyonicus steal the thought th it the animals should eat man rather than man the animals ? From another prophet, cries a townsman, one Daridœus, w 10 prophesied the destruction of towns along the Hellespont and raised up a wave in Aulis. Yes, yes, reply the magistracy we remember. Prophets rise up like waves, and Aulis would be free from prophets. Now. sir, we would hear thy complair t. Before I tell my complaint, the townsman answers, I w ould remark that it was not Daridœus alone who inspired Thyonicus to speak against animal food, but the apes whom his sayings have lured from their forests. They would not have us eat animal food because they do not eat it themselves. At this moment another character in the comedy will rush in, his garments so filthy that doors have to be opened to let out the smell, and when the breeze hath carried it away the sickened magistracy listen to his tale. And the tale he tells is that the filth of his garments is not due to his own uncleanness but to Thyonicus's apes, who hide themselves in the trees and drop filth upon all and sundry who have spoken against their master. I spoke against this pestilential fellow, wherefore I became a mark for every ape, and they being very clever at dropping their filth upon any to whom they owe a grudge have covered me, as you see, sirs, till my condition is that of a porker wallowing for days in a dirty sty. I tried dodging and ducking, but they are clever marksmen ; not a shot missed. This, the magistracy will agree, brings the case against Thyonicus to a head ! And the apes being clever at climbing, the filthy man continues, doors and windows do not keep them out ; all secrets are known to them. But do the apes speak ? ask the magis-

tracy. They speak, sirs, in rudiments, no more, but they are so very clever that it suffices for their wants and purposes. They cannot all be very clever ? Yes, all, without exception ! cries the witness. And what wouldest thou have us do ? the magistracy ask, and he answers : Thyonicus is waiting in the street, hoping to get a verdict from you in his favour. Thyonicus is sent for, and during the little while before his coming a dispute arises as to whether the apes shall be admitted or excluded. The magistracy decide that the stench would be unbearable and that the trial must be held in secret.

When Thyonicus enters he is questioned on all the points, and without hesitation he admits that he is given to talking on every subject and believes that if the world would listen to him all the difficulties of life would be smoothed away by his wisdom. Then comes the question of the apes, whom he hath lured from their forests. Thyonicus will object, saying that he did not employ any lure, that the apes were attracted by his ideas. The world, he says, is attracted only by words : I preach ideas, and the apes understand ideas better than men ; wherefore they came out of their forests to listen, to learn, to protect me against my enemies, who are numerous. The poets are especially anxious to destroy me, for I have given up writing verses and now expend myself in ideas. But our testimony is before thee, Thyonicus, cry the magistracy, the man who is covered with filth, showerings from the apes that have hidden themselves in the trees. He should have kept in the middle of the road, Thyonicus answers. To keep in the middle of the road is my advice to all men. And the apes ? he is asked. O, the apes climb trees, for they are very clever ; all are very clever and dispense my ideas. But the apes have no words, say the magistracy ; we have heard to-day that they speak only in rudiments. Rudiments are all that is necessary in this world, replies Thyonicus ; the rest is vanity, lies, subterfuge. Rudiments are my doctrine ; let us get back to rudiments. The apes understand this, for they are clever, O, very clever. But Homer contains much

more than rudiments, Thyonicus, and if what we hear be true, that thy method is always to speak of thyself and Homer, it would seem that thou admires Homer. In the days of my youth I may have admired him, Thyonicus answers, but now I admire only myself, for truth—— We do not need to hear about truth, say the magistracy ; we need peace in the town of Aulis.

The news that the case is going against Thyonicus reaches the street, and the howling of the apes prevents a decision being given. The officers of the court are sent out to quell the animals, and they return in tatters and very filthy, and it is not until Thyonicus himself goes to the door and asks them to be still that the apes are reduced to silence. The magistracy confer a little while and then the chief magistrate says that quiet and peace being more necessary than truth in Aulis, Thyonicus must be bound over never to speak of Homer again, to which he answers : But I do not speak of Homer ; I abjure Homer. All the magistrates stand up. This is blasphemy ! they say. If Homer be not a God, he is very near to the Godhead. As if mere verses could bring him near to the Godhead ! Thyonicus replies, and the magistracy answer : We cannot enter into an argument regarding the merits of prose and verse. All we need is peace in our town, and our decision is that thou must choose whether thou wilt drink hemlock, which brings an easy death—we recommend it to thee—or cease from ribald attacks upon Homer, whom the Greeks reverence even as a God. After walking about the council chamber deep in thought, Thyonicus replies : My life is more important than Homer's verses, wherefore I choose to live and will for the future abstain from talking of myself unduly. And this message being given to the apes, a howl of execration is raised by them, and the ushers, torn and filthy, enter the court and say that the animals have returned to their original forests. And I—to what original forest shall I return ? Thyonicus asks, and the magistracy answer : To thy last, for thou wert an excellent

sandal-maker till philosophy overtook thee.

Now, masters of the drama, thou hast heard my comedy, cried the marvellous boy, and before I begin the composition it will be of advantage to me to hear how it strikes you. As somewhat slender, said Sophocles. But thou knowest well the value of the pen, master ; it is the pen that inspires, and as soon as I return to Athens I shall enrich my comedy with many touches I have not been able to tell you of. And thou, Euripides—hast no word for me ? I have indeed, replied Euripides. It is all very clever— Master, speak not the words *very clever*, which apply only to apes ! cried the marvellous boy. Thou hast always thy little oil-can. And seeing that they were now almost within earshot of Kebren, standing on the steps of the temple to welcome them, Sophocles begged all to remember that they were about to enter the temple of the Goddess.

CHAPTER XXII

Is Rhesos in the temple, Timotheus ? No, lady. I have looked everywhere, Earine continued, and inquired of different stragglers, but none hath seen him. What can have induced him to hide himself, and on such a day as this ? The last I saw of him was when Thyonicus began to read his verses. Rhesos's eyes filled with tears for his dead wolf, and ashamed of them he must have wandered, always given more to solitude than to company. My business is to look after him, and I would have kept him in my sight if on the way hither Aristophanes had not begun to tell the story of his comedy to the tragic poets, and everybody's ears were open, trying to catch a phrase here and there. What pushing and jostling there was, my peplos nearly torn off my back, the man whose foot was upon it being none too polite. But we patched up the peplos and the quarrel and fell to talking of Aristophanes, agreeing that the title, *The Apes*, was the very title that his

humour would suggest, one that Rhesos would apprehend and enjoy. I never thought of it before, but there is something of Rhesos in Aristophanes and something of Aristophanes in Rhesos. But where is Rhesos? If I do not find him Aristophanes will take his absence from the banquet as a theme to improvise upon; and I do not wish to deprive Rhesos's fellow citizens, who are not mine, from seeing and admiring him in the moment of his triumph. The people always like heroes, whether they be generals, architects, or sculptors. The sight of a man who hath lifted himself above his fellows lifts them, too, and our day of rejoicing will be a sad day if—— What art thou saying, lady Earine? That Rhesos hath run away and will not be at the banquet? It is not possible. Now, what did I tell thee? Here he comes down the hill-side!

I would not scold thee, Rhesos, but thou hast kept me waiting long at the door of the temple and seeking thee up and down the hillside, hearing appreciations of all sorts—of the temple and of myself, some saying that thou hast flattered me; and then there were malicious tongues who said thou wert envious. But Phidias—where is he? Rhesos asked. Doubtless in the temple, Timotheus answered. Then let the door stand ajar, Timotheus, for I would watch the master prowling round my statue, finding faults that nobody else would, and merits, too. So well do I know him that I can tell by his back whether he likes or dislikes. And the door being ajar, Rhesos beheld Phidias surrounded by young men hanging on his lightest word, whether of admonition or of praise. I thought, Timotheus, that the temple was forbidden to Aulis until Athens was satisfied. There are other doors, replied Timotheus, and doubtless a few drachmæ given to the door-keeper closed his ears to the accent of his country. Now he approaches them, said Rhesos, and invites their departure; in a few minutes we shall have them round this way. And as if in answer to his words the young coxcombs appeared, talking of the architecture of the temple, a few holding it to

be worthy of the statue, the many wishing it were otherwise than as it was.

The pediment is not imposing, cried one. I would have had a wider and a grander approach, two flights of steps at least, said another ; and in the discussion that it pleased them to hold, it came to Rhesos to hear that Phidias had challenged the legs of the Goddess, saying they needed scraping. *A little filing around the knees,* were cited as Phidias's exact words, and the young men continued talking blatantly till Earine, who kept watch on Rhesos's face, said : The sculptor of Aphrodite is within your hearing, sirs. My friend's memory is better than mine, replied the first speaker, and what a file can remove is surely unimportant ; and another, afraid lest he should be accused of telling tales behind Phidias's back, sought to eliminate all danger by a little humour, saying : Phidias's attention was withdrawn from the statue by Melissa's search for her children. The children were with her in the temple, said Earine. How could she lose them ? To pray better, replied the young man, they had hidden themselves behind a pillar. And for what were they praying ? That their bunnies might grow round and beautiful as Auntie's and be shapen into marble by Uncle Rhesos ! . . . A knocking was heard from within and Kebren came through the doorway ; and when the cause of the merriment was explained to him he joined in the laughter, and to put an end to it bade the young men away to admire the groves. Nor couldst thou, Rhesos, he added, have restrained thyself at the sight of the children hiding their faces for shame in their mother's peplos. Already I am forgotten by thee, father, and by Earine, Rhesos answered. Melissa's children interest you more than my statue and rightly, since Phidias doth not approve of the knees. And the moment seeming to him propitious to consider the joints that the master had disparaged, he passed over the threshold, followed by Kebren and Earine.

The temple is not yet open to the people ! Kebren cried

back to Timotheus, and he waited for Rhesos to tell him whether he would work over the legs again, or accept them as they had come to him from the model. I would hear from Phidias himself, father, that the knees distract from the body and face ; criticism that is of any ε vail should come from the lips of the master. Had I a file in my hands I could think better. I left a box of tools here last night—— Yes, yes, Rhesos, I can give them to thee in a n oment ! cried Kebren, and bringing the tools out of a corne where he had hidden them, he added : I hope the file is not too rough. I must needs be alone with Earine, father ; I vould withdraw into thoughts and memories before I can deci e to lay chisel or file against my marble. Kebren's reveren e for his son's genius compelled obedience, and Rhesos walked to and fro trying to come to terms with himself ; but he could not shape out his conduct exactly, and remembered instead how in the years gone by whilst walking in Athens with Alkamenes, and coming upon the statue of a young woman in which the legs were not as vivid as the torso, he had said : Sacrifices must needs be made for unity ; in my imagination I see legs better than those I see with my eyes, but—— He and Alkamenes had talked for a long while, asking if they should hold for evermore by Phidias's dogma that unity comes before all else, and their talk returned to him as he considered his statue. Every age hath its own sculpture, he said to himself. Phidias is king among his marbles, and I must be master among mine, or else. . . . Awakening from his reverie his eyes fell upon Earine standing before him, and at the sight of her he began to speak his thoughts aloud, saying : She is the pattern that the Goddess chose to send me. I see nothing to alter, he continued, walking towards the door, nor anything to reproach me. My art is my own, and to-day I am free to follow the current of my soul. Father, open the door ; enter, for I have things to tell thee.

Thou'rt well pleased with thy work ? Kebren asked as he crossed the threshold. Well pleased indeed, Rhesos answered ;

finding nothing to change is a happy moment in a sculptor's life. All the same, Phidias's admonitions should have helped thee to see more clearly, said Kebren. Phidias is a great decorative sculptor, father, and must see and feel differently from me, and I would not be myself if I could find fault with the master or strive with him. My Aphrodite is as the Goddess wished herself to be in the temple. She sent me the pattern, and I have followed it. For a long time, said Earine, I was bidden by intimations to cross the strait, and at last obeyed without fear, believing myself to be possessed of a Goddess. Earine speaks well, said Kebren ; she hath learnt speech from thy marbles, Rhesos, and her story will be told to-night by thee at the banquet. The banquet is for you all, Rhesos answered, but not for me ; my work is my banquet. But the whole town, dear son, is coming to hear thee speak of sculpture ; I foresee this day as the greatest day that Aulis hath ever known— Greater, Rhesos interjected, than the day the Greek fleet sailed for Troy ? Yes, my son. For that we live in it ? Rhesos asked. No, replied Kebren, and the men fell to wrangling about past and present.

How men come to wrangle at last, even father and son ! Earine said to herself, and she found satisfaction in the marble, not looking beyond it. Of what now are they talking ?—of the glories of Babylon and Thebes, drifting wide of the subject : the banquet that is to be held this evening. Ah, now they are back upon it, Rhesos failing to give the promise his father asks that he shall attend. . . . But I can see thee, son, brought in on a litter, thy head adorned with a wreath ; and that is why, since thou wouldest tear every secret out of my heart, I would have thee find some reason in Phidias's admonitions ; thou canst answer them at the banquet. Thou wouldest have me tell the baker, the butcher, and the fishmonger, cried Rhesos, that the greatest sculptor who ever lived in the world judges my statue wrongly—father, for shame ! Forgive me, he added ; I speak hastily.

But I would be away on the sea with Earine, leaving thee and Thrasilos to explain sculpture to those who would hear it explained ; and a greater speech than ever I should make will be spoken by thee, father. Earine, come forward and tell that we, who have voyaged all over the Greek world, have heard everywhere the speech spol en on yonder shore at the burning of Otanes praised and set above even the orations over the dead of Pericles. We have indeed, Earine answered ; and it is not surprising that thou hast passed almost into legend, Kebren, though living hidden away in Aulis, for have we not heard all our lives that thou came st to Aulis as a rhapsodist ? I came to Aulis as a rhapsodist, truly, Earine ; yet I remained as a merchant. But the rhapsodist is in thee still, cried Rhesos ; he will rise up again at the banquet as he did at the funeral pyre. Ah, Rhesos, word : are easily spoken in the silence of a temple, but it is difficult to speak them among men who may become enemies at any moment. How shall I praise thee to those who have begotten sons and daughters that have not fulfilled the hopes they inspired in childhood ? For me to take thy place at the banquet would be to awaken jealousy in the heart of Milon, who on more occasions than one hath been poisoned against me. These poisonings are forgotten now, and thou wouldest not have me produce an asp from my tunic and watch it gliding down the table, snapping at the nearest hands ? To compare the asp with jealousy, father, is an old tale ; speak not of it, but believe me that our intention is the same, though the means are different. I would see thee at table, Rhesos—— I shall be away with Earine, father, sailing for Syracuse, watching the stars whilst thou art exercising thy great gift of speech to the enjoyment of Aulis. The *Triton* floats now in the Euripos, said Kebren ; she looses for Syracuse at daybreak. Then write an order to the captain, father, bidding him loose at sunset. All this is decreed, Rhesos continued, the honour of a great speech going to thee, and to me the honour of a flight to Syracuse, whither many of our

great men have gone already. Since it must be so, dear son, I will write. And having written the order to the captair of the *Triton*, Kebren begged Rhesos to consider once more if the wisest course for him to take was to absent himself from Aulis. Of a certainty it is, Rhesos answered. A year will give the folk a chance of studying the statue they have got for the temple. On my return I will mix with your rejoicings, and my laurels (if any remain after a year's consideration), will be collected by me and worn. Come, Earine ; a long walk across the valley awaits us. We cannot walk through the town—— Sir, cried Timotheus from the doorway, the people will return to their homes if the temple be not opened to them. Then let them enter, Kebren replied. And following Rhesos and Earine through the western door, he stood on the steps of the temple, forgetful of all things except the twain as they hastened across the valley.

